

D LANGUAGE ARTS



Spelling
Vocabulary
Dictation
Writing Mechanics
Creative Expression





Thank you for downloading this sample of Sonlight's Language Arts D Instructor's Guide (what we affectionately refer to as an IG). In order to give you a full perspective on our Instructor's Guides, this sample will include parts from every section that is included in the full IG.

Here's a quick overview of what you'll find in this sample.

- A Quick Start Guide **START HERE**
- A 3-week Schedule
- Copywork/Dictation practice exercises and fun **Creative Expression** assignments.
- Activity Sheets that follow each week's Schedule and Notes.
- A **Scope and Sequence** of topics and skills your children will be developing throughout the school year
- Discussion and comprehension questions for each **Reader** title.

SONLIGHT'S "SECRET" COMES DOWN TO THIS:

We believe most children respond more positively to great literature than they do to textbooks. To properly use this sample to teach your student, you will need the books that are scheduled in it. We include all the books you will need when you purchase a package from sonlight.com.

Curriculum experts develop each IG to ensure that you have everything you need for your homeschool day. Every IG offers a customizable homeschool schedule, complete lesson plans, pertinent activities, and thoughtful questions to aid your students' comprehension. It includes handy teaching tips and pointers so you can homeschool with confidence all year long.

If you need any help using or customizing our IGs, please reach out to our experienced homeschool advisors at sonlight.com/advisors.

We hope you enjoy using this sample. For even more information about Sonlight's IGs, please visit: sonlight.com/ig. It would be our pleasure to serve you as you begin your homeschool journey.

If you like what you see in this sample, visit sonlight.com/languagearts to order your History / Bible / Literature package.

Blessings!

Sarita Holzmann,
Co-founder and president
of Sonlight Curriculum

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advisor@sonlight.com

Language Arts Reading (4-Day)

Language Arts D

By the Sonlight Team

*“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may
gain a heart of wisdom.”*

Psalm 90:12 (NIV)

Sonlight Curriculum® “Language Arts D” (4-Day) Instructor’s Guide and Notes, Third 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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NOTE TO PURCHASER

Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd. is committed to providing the best homeschool resources on the market. This entails regular upgrades to our curriculum and to our Instructor’s Guides. This guide is the 2020 Edition of the Sonlight Curriculum® “Language Arts D” (4-Day) Instructor’s Guide and Notes. If you purchased it from a source other than Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd., you should know that it may not be the latest edition available.

This guide is sold with the understanding that none of the Authors nor the Publisher is engaged in rendering educational services. Questions relevant to the specific educational or legal needs of the user should be addressed to practicing members of those professions.

The information, ideas, and suggestions contained herein have been developed from sources, including publications and research, that are considered and believed to be reliable but cannot be guaranteed insofar as they apply to any particular classroom or homeschooling situation.

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For the latest information about changes in this guide, please visit www.sonlight.com/curriculum-updates. Please notify us of any errors you find not listed on this site. E-mail corrections to IGcorrections@sonlight.com and any suggestions you may have to IGsuggestions@sonlight.com.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction to Your Instructor’s Guide

- 2 Table of Contents
- 3 “Language Arts D”—Booklist
- 5 Before You Begin
- 5 About This Instructor’s Guide
- 6 Program Features and Rationale
- 8 Supplementary Websites
- 8 Corrections and Suggestions
- 9 Quick Start Guide

2 Schedule and Notes

Sonlight Curriculum® “Language Arts D”
Schedule, Notes, and Activity Sheets
Works Cited

3 Reading Assignments and Notes

- 1 Readers Study Guide

4 Instructor’s Guide Resources

- 1 Appendix 1: Language Arts D—Scope and Sequence: Schedule for Topics and Skills
- 3 Appendix 2: Recommendations for Teaching Writing
- 7 Appendix 3: Glossary of Phonics Rules
- 11 Appendix 4: Basic Spelling Rules for Phonics
- 13 Appendix 5: Language Arts Check-off List
- 17 Appendix 6: Grammar Guide
- 45 Appendix 7: How to Do a Research Project
- 73 Appendix 8: Tips When Using the Internet

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDES LANGUAGE ARTS

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY!

Get a three-week sample of any Sonlight Instructor's Guide—FREE!
sonlight.com/samples

Teach writing naturally and with confidence using Sonlight's unique Language Arts Instructor's Guides. LA Guides also include:

- 1 **Teaching Scripts (in the early grades)**
Read the teaching scripts in the IG when you introduce new ideas, concepts, and assignments. Great for parents just starting to homeschool or to provide extra confidence when teaching!
- 2 **Overview Summaries**
Weekly overviews summarize the concepts, skills and assignments for each week.
- 3 **Copywork/Dictation Assignments**
With weekly copywork or dictation assignments, children model master communicators to learn the basics of writing. Assignments are based on your children's ages and ability levels, and most passages come from their Readers.
- 4 **Spelling**
Sonlight Language Arts Instructor's Guides include spelling lists in levels 1-4. Beginning with Level 1, each week's spelling list corresponds with the reading. For Language Arts D-F, choose one of the stand-alone programs. The IG has a space to record your progress.
- 5 **Grammar and Writing Mechanics**
Receive clear grammar instruction about specific concepts from the week's copywork or dictation passage, then complete a few exercises to practice and reinforce the concepts. Answers included. Your children will learn to communicate effectively.
- 6 **Evaluative Rubrics**
Easily determine how to evaluate your children's work. Are they on track? What areas could use additional practice? What are the expectations in this assignment?

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7 Copywork/Dictation Assignments

1 Write the Story

6 The Cat Book Skills Checklist

2 Letter of the Week

CREATIVE EXPRESSION	Copywork 1	Copywork Application	The Cat Book	Copywork 2 Optional: Dictionary
Other Notes:				
Weekly Overview				
Letter of the Week:	Creative Expression:			
Language, Phonics & Spelling:	Copywork Application: Root/base words with different initial sounds; names; rhymes; vowels. (I)			
Special Interest Vocabulary: Introduce your children to vocabulary for topics that are important to your family's life.	Write a story to go along with predetermined illustrations. (Narration)			
Brain Challenges—Organization: Sorting practice.				
Building Words: Form words with vowel and consonant cards; letter sound recognition; word recognition.				

7 Effective Creative Writing Instruction

Step-by-step creative writing instruction encourages exploration and sets your children free to develop their creative side. They become superb written communicators, too.

Your IG includes assignments in a wide variety of styles and genres, including imaginative, persuasive, expository, narrative, journaling, etc. Each assignment includes instruction and a sample of what your student might produce.

The writing assignments follow a consistent pattern each week: copywork or dictation on Days 1 and 5; mechanics instruction and practice on Day 2; pre-planning for writing on Day 3; writing assignment on Day 4.

8 Activity Sheets and Answers

Activity sheets reinforce your teaching and provide assignments that make your children eager to learn how to write well. A variety of activity options coordinate with your students' language arts studies and draw on a range of skills and interests. Weekly notes provide answers to grammar questions and suggested responses for creative writing assignments.

9 Schedules for Optional Workbooks

All levels include schedules for optional workbooks. These workbooks offer your children additional practice in areas where they may struggle, such as phonics, grammar, and vocabulary. Visit sonlight.com for these supplemental materials.

How to Choose Language Arts for Sonlight Levels K-C and Readers K-4

Pick the language arts program that is closest to your children's ability level. Take the language arts assessment at sonlight.com/assessment. Then add the same level Readers for each child. Your Language Arts Guide includes the schedule and notes for those corresponding Readers. ♦

Language Arts 1
Days 86-90: Date: _____ to _____

Week 18					
Date:	Day 86	Day 87	Day 88	Day 89	Day 90
SPELLING	Words	Introduce the Words	Write Them Big!	Copy Them Small	Mix It Up!
PHONICS	I Can Read It! Word Lists	Lesson 18			
	Phonics Activities		Form Words	Play Concentration	
	Optional: Explode the Code 2	pp. 55-56	p. 57	p. 58	p. 59
HAND-WRITING	Handwriting Without Tears: My Printing Book	p. 50		p. 51	
READERS	I Can Read It! Book 3	"The Tent" pp. 12-14	"A Hint" pp. 15-16	"A Cast" pp. 17-18	"The Fish" pp. 19-20 "Fish and Chips" pp. 21-22
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Copywork 1	Contractions	Synthesis	Match Middle Sounds Copywork 2
<i>Other Notes:</i>					

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9

4

Parental Notes

Weekly Overview

Spelling: /qu/ digraph

Phonics:
Form Words: vowels and consonants; digraphs; word recognition
Play Concentration: sight words; memorization

Creative Expression:
Contractions: apostrophes; word shortening
Synthesis: focused thinking; sequential description; narration
Match Middle Sounds: vowels; recognize letter sounds

Vowel Activity Sheet 4

Circle the letter that makes the first sound in the name of each picture. Then write the letter in the space provided.



a f m



f a p



d o a



c b a

ant, Africa, astronaut, antler

Vowel Activity Sheet 4 | Language Arts 1

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Not sure what levels your children need?

TAKE A FREE LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT.

sonlight.com/assessment

Before You Begin ...

You are about to embark on an exciting journey! With Sonlight's Language Arts program as both your passport and map, you and your children will travel to exotic, wonderful places. Be aware, though, that you may at times face some rough seas. And that's OK.

In fact, it's more than OK. Confusion and frustration are perfectly common, natural reactions in any educational setting. Sonlight's goal is to minimize such distractions on your Language Arts voyage. We thought it would be a good idea to explain a couple of things up front that we hope will calm the seas, fill your sails, and lead to safe harbor.

Leaving Your Comfort Zone

As you launch Sonlight's Language Arts program, it will not take you long to notice that something different is going on here. Are you missing something? Probably not! The mental map of your experience probably does not match what you are seeing.

You were probably taught Language Arts in a traditional way using workbooks and repetition. Sonlight does not teach Language Arts this way. Our research revealed that traditional methods, while comfortable, produced inferior results and were boring!

Traditional methods focus on repetition and drive students to memorize chunks of unrelated material in order to pass a test. What happens after the test? Unfortunately, students usually soon forget what they learned. Has learning really occurred then? Maybe. But, many students only learn how to beat the system!

"Memorize, pass test, forget" is not the pattern Sonlight promotes.

The Sonlight Way

Instead, Sonlight's Language Arts program is based on the "natural learning" approach. "Natural" or "integrated" learning means students learn by discovery. They observe, analyze, and then seek to imitate what they have seen a master wordsmith do before them.

The "natural learning" approach is not as intuitively obvious as the instruction found in most standard workbooks. Students will make a discovery, and we will reinforce it for them. However, they won't find 50 similar "problems" neatly laid out for them to "solve."

In "natural learning," students see each principle at work in the natural context of a sentence or paragraph that they have read in one of their assignments. They have to really puzzle things through, and you will occasionally have to help them figure things out.

The "natural learning" approach is, in some ways, slower than traditional workbook methods. But here's the key: when students "get" a principle that they've been striving to master via this method, they will never forget it! They will understand it thoroughly and be able to apply it in almost any context. That is true learning. That is our goal.

For more in-depth information regarding Sonlight's Language Arts philosophy, go to: www.sonlight.com/educational-philosophy.

Additional Resources

As you adjust to teaching with the "natural learning" approach, you may want some additional assistance at times. For example, you may want to familiarize yourself with quality resources such as Dr. Ruth Beechick's books. For further study, we recommend Dr. Ruth Beechick's books *The Three-R's Series* and *You CAN Teach Your Child Successfully*.

If you feel like your children just seem to be struggling or overwhelmed with their work, don't hesitate to put some books away and simply wait awhile. Instead, spend more time on your Read-Alouds and simply continue to encourage a love for reading. In a few months, try again, and you will probably find that allowing a little extra time for your children to grow made success easier for them to attain.

Join the Family

Besides referring to your Instructor's Guide and books, please visit our Sonlight Connections Community (sonlight.com/connections). If you have any questions about how to teach, or why you might (or might not) want to do something; if you wonder if someone has an idea about how to do something better, or whether you or your children are on track or need special help or attention; or for whatever reason, you will find a large community of friendly, helpful people available.

About this Instructor's Guide

Sonlight's Language Arts program seeks to develop your children's writing abilities via dictation, application, and creative expression. It emphasizes spelling, phonics, vocabulary development, and handwriting. Your children will write daily in a variety of ways.

We provide a 36-week, normal school length schedule. Please take some time now to plan your school year so that you can meet your educational objectives as well as your family's needs. It is okay to use more time to finish this program.

This guide consists of several parts.

Section One provides a brief overview of your Lan-

guage Arts studies for the year. We want you to not only know what to do, but also why you do it.

Section Two includes the heart of the program: record-keeping/schedule sheets and notes. Use the schedule sheets to find each week’s assignments and to record what you’ve done each day. Simply place a check mark by each assignment as it’s completed. You can also use these sheets to record problem areas or subjects and topics needing special review. Please feel free to modify our suggested schedule to match your own—and your children’s—specific needs.

Keep these records to demonstrate to others (government authorities, in particular) what you have taught your children.

Immediately following the schedule, you’ll find Notes with instructions for assignments and Answer Keys. These notes contain Weekly Overviews that outline the skills and assignments covered that week, as well as Rubrics that will help you evaluate the week’s writing assignment. See the “Recommendations for Teaching Writing” article in Section Four for more information about rubrics. Directly after the Notes are the Weekly Activity Sheets with your children’s dictation passages as well as their other assignments.

Section Three includes **Reader Study Guides** that contain discussion questions and other teaching notes that will help you guide your students through the Readers scheduled in this guide.

Section Four contains several helpful resources for all users. This section contains an overview of topics scheduled in this guide, teaching tips for how to use the tools included in this program, as well as suggestions that will help you modify this program to best fit your family’s needs.

We also recommend you visit the **My Downloads** section of your Sonlight Account for several other helpful teaching tools, including:

- Getting Organized—includes great tips about scheduling your school year, modifying our program and keeping records
- Language Arts Skills Check-Off List
- Tips When Using the Internet

Items You Will Need

- lined notebook paper
- #2 pencils
- art supplies for illustrations (crayons, colored pencils, or markers)

- lined index cards for a couple assignments (e.g., the research paper project)

If you might reuse your Instructor’s Guide and Student Activity Sheets in the future (for a younger child, for instance), we strongly suggest that you purchase an extra set of Activity Sheets when you buy the Instructor’s Guide. That way, when we update our Instructor’s Guides you will have matching Activity Sheets when you need them. Please contact us if you are looking for Activity Sheets from the past.

Program Features and Rationale

Dictation

Every year customers ask: “How can I teach my children proper grammar [punctuation, etc.]? They don’t know the first thing about proper sentence construction . . .” Our answer? Dictation! No matter how much your children complain, unless they consistently come back with 100% correct papers, make dictation a priority!

If you’re unfamiliar with dictation, it’s exactly what it sounds like. You read a passage to your children, and they write it exactly as read, concentrating on correct spelling, punctuation, etc. We agree with Dr. Ruth Beechick that dictation exercises provide a “well-rounded approach to language” by enabling the parent to deal with issues of grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing, and thinking in a natural (uncontrived) setting, with a relatively small time-expenditure and no workbooks. If you own her book, please read—or reread—Dr. Beechick’s comments in *You CAN Teach Your Child Successfully* (pages 69-89).

Your children may resist dictation at first. In the long run, they will come to enjoy it if you simply persist. Tell your children that they are “teaching their hands to obey their mind.”

Optional Dictation Passages

While our goal is for your children to write every day, we realize that there are some days when your children will just not feel like writing. All children will have “dry” days when it seems like getting blood from a stone would be easier than getting one paragraph from them.

So what should you do on those “dry” days? Mercilessly browbeat them into submission? Not if you value your own sanity! Just skip writing that day? Not if you want your children to learn to love and excel at writing . . . Instead, we recommend another solution: dictation.

For your convenience, we provide an optional dictation passage each week. The next time you find yourself with a

reluctant writer, just use it as your writing assignment for the day. And encourage your children to get some extra rest so that they're ready to tackle their regular writing assignment the next day.

5-Minute Mechanics

In order to become more proficient writers, we believe students need to not only practice writing but also understand “what’s going on under the hood” in what they’re reading and writing. Therefore, each week we offer an introduction to a grammatical or writing mechanics topic (grammatical rule, literary term, punctuation, capitalization, etc.). Look for the skills covered each week in the “Weekly Overview” table, located at the beginning of the Day 1 Creative Expression Notes. For a 36-week progression of topics and skills studied this year in Language Arts, see our Schedule of Topics and Skills, located in **Section Three**.

Creative Expression (Writing)

Sonlight’s Creative Expression assignments encompass a wide variety of writing tasks, styles, and skills. For example, your children will encounter traditional composition practice (ranging from formal essays to informal thank-you notes), research, poetry, book reports, analysis, and fun, inspired creative assignments. We believe that the breadth and variety of writing assignments will launch your children to new heights in their writing—and that they’ll have a lot of fun in the process!

We designed our writing assignments to help your children develop fundamental skills that they will build upon in the future. We hope you are looking forward to the new challenges we present this year. If you’ve had a chance to preview this guide and some of the work seems daunting, don’t worry: Just because we use new or advanced concepts (similes, metaphors, etc.) doesn’t mean the assignments themselves are hard. Give your children the benefit of the doubt! Let them try the assignments as they are, but feel free to modify if necessary.

Our desire at this point is not mastery (either of vocabulary or concepts), but acquaintance and familiarity. We believe mastery can come over years of repeated brief encounters with the same material.

For more information about how to use this program to help you confidently teach writing this year, please see the “Recommendations for Teaching Writing” article in **Section Four**.

Spelling

In our early elementary products, spelling has been incorporated into the Language Arts programs. From this point forward, however, you will need to decide how much more spelling practice your student needs. Generally we recommend choosing a spelling program for at least Levels D-F and then continue with the spelling program if your student struggles. *Spelling You See* is a great option to help your students as spelling challenges advance. Use the blank rows on the Schedule pages to record your spelling work.

As students get older, correcting their writing assignments will eventually become the natural spelling work for most students. You can also use the weekly dictation exercises to help you monitor your students’ spelling progress. Consider keeping records on the weekly schedule pages of errors you see consistently. Use the list of spelling rules included in the **My Downloads** section of your Sonlight account to help you review those issues with your student.

Vocabulary

While the bulk of our Vocabulary study is contained in the Read-Aloud study guide and part of the History/Bible/Literature Instructor’s Guide, you will see some terms defined in the Reader Study Guides in **Section Three** as well. The books we choose for you to read aloud often tie to the same historical time period as the rest of the texts we select, but are usually written at a higher reading level than the books we schedule as Readers. Therefore, Read-Alouds provide rich, content-relevant language presented during a time in which you can easily pause and discuss unfamiliar words with your students.

In all of our study guides, we categorize the words we highlight in two ways. **Vocabulary** words are words your students will probably encounter in other texts --not just those included in this curriculum. We list these words within an excerpt of the text from the book in which they are found so that you may challenge your students to define the terms using the clues found in the context of the rest of the story. Simply read these short quotes aloud and see if your students can tell you the meaning of the **bold italicized** terms. For example:

Read: “**Unobtrusively** Johnny got his notebook and pencil.”

Ask your child: “What do you think “Unobtrusively” means?”

After your student answers, compare their response to the answer in parentheses: (in a manner to avoid notice)

Cultural Literacy terms are words that, if defined while

your students are reading, will broaden and deepen their understanding of the text. However, these words are generally specific to course content, and we wouldn't expect your students read or hear them on a regular basis. You may use these words, formatted in **bold** followed by a colon and their definitions, more like a convenient glossary. For example:

Define the word when it comes up in the text—
amplitude: the arc of the horizon between east and west.

If you'd like more vocabulary practice, we recommend the *Wordly Wise* program. We schedule this optional workbook for you.

Student Activity Sheets

We have included Activity Sheets to help you help your children. For levels D-W, to enable your children to study independently, you will find the bulk of the Language Arts instruction on the Weekly Activity Sheets, with a small summary of what we teach each day included in your notes. Feel free to read and work with them through the lessons on the Activity Sheets, or give them the reins to work solo, once you feel they are able to do so.

Supplementary Websites

We know that there are times throughout our curriculum when we simply cannot cover all the material on a given subject. In these instances we will provide internet search instructions for you to find more information. Please use caution and your own discretion as you look at different internet sites. We highly recommend that you as the parent and teacher look before allowing your student to do the search with you or on their own. We hope you find this helpful!

Corrections and Suggestions

Since we at Sonlight constantly work to improve our product, we would love it if we could get you to help us with this process.

Whenever you find an error anywhere in one of our Instructor's Guides, please send a short e-mail to: IGcorrections@sonlight.com. It would be helpful if the subject line of your e-mail indicated where the problem is. For instance, "Language Arts D/Section Two/Week 1/Day 3." Then, in the message portion of the e-mail, tell us what the error is.

If, while going through our curriculum, you think of any way we could improve our product, please e-mail your suggestions to: IGsuggestions@sonlight.com. If you know of a different book we should use, if you think we should read a book we assign at a different point in the year, or if you have any other ideas, please let us know. Your efforts will greatly help us improve the quality of our products, and we very much appreciate you taking the time to let us know what you find. Thanks for your help! ■


Section Two

Schedule and Notes

Language Arts D

Days 1–4: Date: _____ to _____

Week Overview																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Week 1					
	Date:	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i> ¹				
HAND-WRITING	<i>Recommended: Handwriting Without Tears</i> ¹				
GRAMMAR	<i>Optional: The Grammar Ace</i> ¹	Lesson 1: Nouns			
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	<i>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000</i> ¹ (for books 4–12)	Lesson 1A		Lesson 1B	Lesson 1C
READERS	Regular: <i>Pocahontas and the Strangers</i> ¹	chap. 1 	chap. 2	chaps. 3–4	chap. 5
	Advanced: <i>The Corn Grows Ripe</i> ¹	chap. 1	chaps. 2–3	chap. 4	chap. 5
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation	Dictation Application	Five Senses	See It, Describe It
Other Notes					

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1. Find notes for the Readers in **Section Three**, arranged alphabetically. To accommodate various reading speeds, we recommend pulling each set of book notes and simply placing them inside each reading title.
2. Purchase optional materials separately: We do not include them in the LA Package.

Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics: Basic rules of sentences: nouns; adjectives</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Use adjectives</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write a descriptive paragraph</p>

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ly we recommend choosing a spelling program for at least Levels D-F and then continue with the spelling program if your student struggles. *Spelling You See* is a great option to help your students as spelling challenges advance. Use the blank rows on the Schedule pages to record your spelling work.

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Handwriting

Your children will practice their handwriting in the Copywork/Dictation activities and writing assignments. However, we highly recommend purchasing a handwriting program. *Handwriting Without Tears* is a wonderful program that we recommend often.

If you would like help scheduling any of the programs we offer, *Handwriting Without Tears* or your preferred program, please go online to sonlight.com/handwritingschedules to download and print the appropriate file. Then use the blank line to record what you have done.

Grammar

Sonlight's Language Arts incorporates grammar in its natural language-learning approach. If you would like to supplement that approach, we recommend *The Grammar Ace* for one year between 4th-7th grades. This self-paced grammar supplement contains a progressive journey through only the most practical grammar your children need. If you wish to further study grammar after *The Grammar Ace*, we recommend you move on to *Grammar 5* and *Grammar 6*. If you complete Sonlight's grammar series and want to have a fourth year of grammar, we recommend that you move on to *Winston Grammar Advanced*.

Vocabulary Development

While the bulk of our Vocabulary study is contained in the Read-Aloud study guide and part of the HBL Instructor's Guide, you will see some terms defined in the Reader Study Guides too. The books we choose for you to read aloud tie to the same historical time period as the rest of the texts we select, but are usually written at a higher reading level than the books we schedule as Readers. Therefore, Read-Alouds provide rich, content-relevant language presented during a time in which you can easily pause and discuss unfamiliar words with your students.

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Wordly Wise

If you'd like more vocabulary practice, we recommend the *Wordly Wise* program. Books 4-12 of the *Wordly Wise 3000* series follow the same format and we have included a schedule for you. We recommend choosing the book that matches with your student's grade level.

Reader Notes

We include the Readers schedule and corresponding Study Guides in both the History and Language Arts Guides. However, we do not include the map points in the Language Arts guides because we consider geography part of our History program. Please refer to your History/Bible/Literature D Guide for more information about maps. Find the Study Guide notes for the weekly Readers in **Section Three**. They are organized in the order your students will read them.

Creative Expression

Our goal is to have your children write all week long. To keep things interesting and to offer a broad range of skill practice, this writing practice varies throughout the week. On Day 1 we suggest your children practice Dictation. If so, your children will first study the passage and then write it down as you read it aloud to them. After Dictation, they will learn about a concept for Mechanics Practice (most weeks). On Days 2–4, they will work on more formalized Creative Expression assignments. These assignments vary widely each week in order to give your children experience in all types of writing—and oral presentation, too.

Preferred Dictation Method

Ask your children to read through the dictation passage to familiarize themselves with it. They should note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. They should ask you to clarify anything they're unsure about.

Give your children no more than five to ten minutes to prepare to take dictation. Preparation may involve writing out unfamiliar words, practicing spelling them out loud or on paper, trying to remember how a word looks by “seeing” it in their minds, drawing a word in large letters written in mid-air with an imaginary pen, etc. When their time is up, give the dictation, clause by clause, reading each clause only twice (repeating it only once). Your children should write in the cursive style. As you read the passage to them, you should not emphasize the different sounds in each word.

Before handing their papers to you, your children should check their work for errors. They should mark and correct any errors they find. Discuss with your children what you think they have done particularly well, as well as what they could do better.

If you see consistent spelling, punctuation, or handwriting problems, keep a record on the weekly schedule and review those areas using the list of spelling rules included in the **My Downloads** section of your Sonlight account.

About Mechanics Practice

Most weeks (starting in Week 5), we offer a brief introduction to one grammatical or mechanical topic. This year your children will work through three basic groups of skills. We will study basic grammar skills in two main sections: **Sentence Basics** (nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.), and **The Building Blocks of Sentences** (phrases, clauses, active and passive voice, etc.). We’ll then intersperse the grammatical lessons with common **Mechanics** topics that we’ll schedule throughout the year.

Look for the skills covered each week in the “Weekly Overview” table, located right after the schedule. For a 36-week progression of topics and skills studied this year in Language Arts, see our Schedule of Topics and Skills, located in **Section Four**.

Feeling Overwhelmed?

Due to the myriad of concepts to cover—many of which may seem abstract—and the subjectivity that evaluating writing assignments often requires, the idea of teaching Language Arts may seem daunting. Understandably! For this reason we have included an article called “Recommendations for Teaching Writing” in **Section Four** of this guide to help you navigate the writing portion of your Language Arts journey this year. We hope the suggestions found here will help you determine how to use this program so that it works best for your family, and will provide answers to further teaching questions you may have.

Day
1

Dictation

Read through the dictation passage with your children. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Next, read the dictation as your children write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Joy is found in giving the right answer. And how good is a word spoken at the right time! The path of life leads up for those who are wise.¹

Day
1

Optional: Dictation Passage

For your convenience, we provide an additional dictation passage each week. If your children are having an “off” day, just use one of these alternative dictation passages instead of your writing assignment for the day. Feel free to take a break instead of trying to grind your way through the regular assignment.

If you are reading the regular reader books, use the passage listed under Regular Readers. If you are reading the advanced reader books, use the passage listed under Advanced Readers.

Regular Readers:

“I’ll tell you, then,” he said. “We are going to wait. Before we do anything, we are going to see what the palefaces do. There, I have told you. Now go and play.”²

Advanced Readers:

Al! Tigre was ready. He crammed down another tortilla, grabbed his hat and hunting bag and slingshot, and hurried after Father. Dog, his little yellow tail curled happily over his back, ran after Tigre.³

Day
2

Dictation Application

It’s a new homeschool year, and we hope that you’re excited to be at the helm of your children’s education. It’s truly a privilege to be able to take such an active role in shaping your children’s future.

Today, we review some basic ideas that we’ll build upon in the coming weeks. While we don’t think it necessary to study grammar in depth at this level, we do want to focus on concepts that are closely related to writing. In this way, your children will learn the grammar they really need to know at this level in the context of how they can use it (*apply* it) to become better writers.

1. Proverbs 15:23–24 (NIRV®).

2. Clyde Robert Bulla, *Pocahontas and the Strangers* (Avyx: Littleton, CO, 1988), 18.

3. Dorothy Rhoads, *Corn Grows Ripe*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1993), 20.

The **Week 1 Activity Sheet** has several points for you to discuss with your children regarding sentence rules, nouns, and adjectives. They will examine the punctuation in the dictation passage to discover that each sentence ends with a period because they are statements, and they will also identify the nouns.

After learning about how adjectives improve writing, your children will rewrite a short passage, adding adjectives to make it more interesting.

Answers:

Which punctuation marks are used in the dictation passage? (*periods*)

Why were those particular punctuation marks used? (*All sentences are statements*)

What nouns can you find in the dictation passage? (*Answers: land, America, Amanda, New World, sea, land, rivers, trees, birds.*)

Here is an example of what a passage enhanced with additional adjectives might look like:

On a cold morning in 1609, a heavy man made his way over London Bridge. He wore a cloth jacket and a beaver-skin cap. His homemade clothes were splashed with mud, and black mud sucked at his leather shoes. He could hardly see for the driving rain in his face.

Day
3

Five Senses

Most children will struggle with learning to write well, because our everyday spoken language is so forgiving. When we talk with each other, the quick interplay of our speech allows us to work out what we want to say as we say it. The written word, on the other hand, needs to be concise and clear. No one likes to read a confused, rambling essay. We need to do our thinking before we put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboards).

Children need to be taught how to think through their writing assignments. We wouldn't give our children wrenches and tell them to fix leaky faucets, yet too often we feel fine handing them pencils and telling them to write essays.

Today's activity will help you take those first steps together with your children. Talk with your children about the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, feeling, and taste), and then guide them through the brainstorming activity under "Five Senses" on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**. Help them think of adjectives that are inspired by each of their five senses, and then ask them to write the adjectives they think of on the lines provided. Have them think of different nouns to describe.

Possible Answers:

1. SIGHT: *blue, bright, shiny, beautiful, glowing*
2. HEARING: *loud, noisy, rhythmic, annoying, musical*
3. SMELL: *stinky, inviting, flowery, aromatic, strong*
4. FEELING: *rough, smooth, silky, soft, supple*
5. TASTE: *salty, spicy, delicious, tangy, sweet*

Day
4

See It, Describe It

Your children's assignment today is to write a short paragraph that describes something they can see. It can be an object or an animal or something they see in their imagination.

Remind your children to think in terms of their five senses. What does it look like? Sound like? Smell, feel, and taste like? The more descriptive adjectives your children use, the better their descriptions will be. Feel free to give them as much help as they need.

Don't worry too much about mechanics (proper spelling, punctuation, etc.) right now. There will be plenty of time in the future to work on those things when they learn to edit and revise their drafts.

For now, focus on clearly transferring their thoughts to paper on "See It, Describe It" on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**. Did they use good descriptive words? Were they able to apply what they learned this week? Encourage them to be as imaginative and creative as they can be in their descriptions.

Here's what a sample paragraph might look like:

My mother collects elephants made of wood, stone and glass. My favorite one is made out of cut crystal glass that breaks the light into brilliant rainbows when the sun shines through it. It shimmers in the light. It is surprisingly heavy. The cut surface feels rough like an elephant's hide might feel. With its thick trunk up in the air I can almost hear it call! While this shiny animal has no smell, its nose is certainly long enough.

How to Evaluate This Assignment

Since this is their first writing assignment of the year, don't worry about evaluating it too heavily. Today, have your children simply focus on getting their thoughts on paper. When they're finished, ask them to read their stories to you and ensure they have a beginning, middle and end. If you'd like, you can also go back and work with them on the basic mechanics: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Did they describe the object in an interesting way using their five senses? If so, then they have succeeded.

Rubrics

Have you ever wondered how you should evaluate your children's writing? Much of literary critique is subjective, but we understand that sometimes it's 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.

Each week, review the rubrics we offer and keep the listed items in mind as you work on the assignments with your students. When they turn in their work, use the topics in the rubric to help you determine how your students performed each skill. Use the rubrics to help you more clearly gauge the areas your children could use more work and make note to revise your instruction accordingly.

At this age, we want to emphasize the writing process more than the final result. Think back to when your students learned to talk. They could probably understand your instructions and respond to you long before they formed a complete sentence. Now that they can read independently, expressing their own thoughts on paper is the next step. Learning to write is like "learning to speak on paper." Plan to teach your children to write with the same small steps and gentle instruction you used when they learned to talk. Rubrics will help you focus on a few steps at a time, slowly each week.

For more information about rubrics, how to create your own and how to help your students use them independently as they grow, see the "Recommendations for Teaching Writing" article in **Section Four**. ■

Descriptive Paragraph Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The paragraph thoroughly describes a single object
_____	5 pts	The paragraph appeals to the five senses
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses adjectives to add interest and detail
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	Each sentence begins with a capital letter
_____	5 pts	Each sentence ends with the correct punctuation mark
_____	5 pts	Each sentence express a complete thought
_____	÷ 30 pts possible = _____ %	
Total pts		



Dictation

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Then, listen to Mom or Dad read the passage below aloud while you record it on a separate sheet of paper.

Joy is found in giving the right answer. And how good is a word spoken at the right time! The path of life leads up for those who are wise.¹

Dictation Application

There are two **basic rules of sentences**:

1. Sentences begin with a capital letter
2. Sentences end with a punctuation mark (either a period, question mark, or exclamation point).

Which punctuation marks are used in the passage below?

“There is a land called America,” said Amanda. “Some call it the New World. It’s across the sea, and it’s a beautiful land with rivers and trees and birds.”²

Why were those particular punctuation marks used?

Nouns are people, places, and things (including ideas). Take a look around your room. Tell Mom or Dad some of the nouns you see.

What nouns can you find in the passage “There is a

1. Proverbs 15:23–24 (NirV®).

2. Clyde Robert Bulla, *A Lion to Guard Us*, (Harper Trophy: New York, 1989), 11.

land...”?

On their own, nouns are not necessarily all that interesting. Take the noun *car*, for example. From just the word *car*, what do you know about the car? Not much. What color is it? Is it brand new or a classic antique or a pile of metal destined for the junk heap? You have no idea.

So how do writers make nouns more interesting? By adding descriptive words—called **adjectives**—to them.

For example:

The car raced around the track.

The shiny new Indy car raced around the cold, wet track.

Which sentence is better? Do you see how adding *shiny*, *new*, *Indy*, *cold*, and *wet* made the second sentence much more interesting?

Good writers use adjectives *carefully*. Ever heard of too much of a good thing? Well, that phrase definitely applies to the use of adjectives.

How many adjectives are too many? It varies. How will you know when you’ve used too many adjectives? The sentence just won’t sound right. For example:

The shiny new Indy car raced around the cold, wet track.

The shiny, fast, new, blue Indy car raced around the black, cold, wet, slippery, round track.

What do you think of the second example? Awkward, right? It’s *too* descriptive. The second example sentence crosses the line from descriptive to distracting.

Rewrite the following passage³, adding some descriptive adjectives to make it more interesting:

On a morning in 1609, a man made his way over a bridge. He wore a jacket and a cap. His clothes were splashed with mud, and mud sucked at his shoes. He could hardly see for the rain in his face.

3. Clyde Robert Bulla, *A Lion to Guard Us*, (Harper Trophy: New York, 1989), 1 (paraphrased).



Language Arts D: Week 1 Activity Sheet

Five Senses

When writers describe nouns with adjectives, they often think in terms of their five senses. What does it look like? What does it sound like? What does it smell, feel, and taste like? In this way, they are able to bring nouns to life with vivid descriptions.

Think about your five senses (sight, hearing, smell, feeling, and taste). Which adjectives are inspired by each of your five senses? Write the adjectives on the lines below. Think of different nouns to describe to help you come up with many different adjectives.

1. Sight

2. Hearing

3. Smell

4. Feeling

5. Taste

See It, Describe It

Look around you. What do you see? There are objects everywhere and you use your senses to learn about them. Choose an object to describe. Use your senses to explain what it is like. What does it look like? What does it feel like? You may need to get creative to describe the sound, taste, and smell, depending on the object you choose! Write a paragraph describing the object on a separate piece of paper. Use descriptive words to make your writing interesting. ■

Language Arts D

Days 5–8: Date: _____ to _____

Week Overview																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Week 2					
	Date:	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i>				
HAND-WRITING	<i>Recommended: Handwriting Without Tears</i>				
GRAMMAR	<i>Optional: The Grammar Ace</i>	Lesson 2: Verbs			
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	<i>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000 (for books 4–12)</i>	Lesson 1D		Lesson 1E	Lesson 2A
READERS	Regular: <i>Pocahontas and the Strangers</i>	chap. 6	chap. 7	chap. 8	chap. 9
	Advanced: <i>The Corn Grows Ripe</i>	chaps. 6–7	chap. 8	chaps. 9–10	chaps. 11–12
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation	Dictation Application	How Do You Do That?	I Couldn't Believe My Eyes!
<i>Other Notes</i>					

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Weekly Overview
Mechanics: Use adverbs
Creative Expression:
<u>Assignment:</u> Write a story

Creative Expression	
Day 5	Dictation

Read through the dictation passage with your children. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Next, read the dictation as your children write it down on a separate piece of paper.

You who are godly, sing with joy to the Lord. It is right for honest people to praise him. Sing a new song to him. Play with skill, and shout with joy. What the Lord says is right and true. He is faithful in everything he does.¹

Day
5

Optional: Dictation Passage

Regular Readers:

Captain John Smith raised his head. She saw his face. It was half covered with golden hair. His eyes were blue. Never before had she seen a man's eyes that were blue.²

Advanced Readers:

And the schoolmaster said, "Do not be afraid to ask questions, Dionisio. Never accept any statement without weighing it. Reason out the answer for yourself."³

Day
6

Dictation Application

Last week, you and your children discussed how adding descriptive words can enliven their writing. This week, you're going to explore the similar relationship that exists between verbs and the words that modify them—**adverbs**.

Verbs express actions or states of being. While nouns are the people, places, and things in a sentence, verbs tell what those people, places, and things *do* or *are*. Quickly review verbs with your children by analyzing yesterday's dictation passage. What verbs can you and your children find together? (*sing, sings, play, shout, says*)

Ask your children to rewrite the passage on this week's Activity Sheet adapted from *A Lion to Guard Us*, adding some descriptive adverbs to make the verbs more interesting.

Here is an example of what a passage enhanced with additional adverbs might look like:

She hesitantly took a step after him, but Cook's voice shrilly called her back. "A-man-da." She slowly and carefully closed the door. Then, she dejectedly walked down the long, cold hall and into the kitchen.

Day
7

How Do You Do That?

To help your children think more imaginatively about some common verbs they may use often, guide them through the activity on "How Do You Do That?" on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**. For each of the verbs listed, ask your children to write as many adverbs as they can think of that could describe that verb.

If they get stuck, feel free to give them a hand. Help them understand that using adverbs with these verbs will make their writing come alive.

Some possible answers:

RUN: quickly, slowly, steadily, determinedly

JUMP: high, joyfully, excitedly, carefully

LAUGH: loudly, heartily, nervously, uncontrollably

SMILE: beautifully, wickedly, sadly, happily

TALK: quietly, rapidly, rudely, secretly

Day
8

I Couldn't Believe My Eyes!

Last week, your children wrote a description of something they could see. This week, their task is to write an exciting story about what they described. Beginning with the words "I couldn't believe my eyes!", your children should spin a short, imaginative yarn about the amazing things their item did.

Help your children focus on telling a story with a beginning, middle, and end in logical order. Also, ask your children to try to incorporate what they learned about adverbs this week into their assignment. When they're done with their first draft of their story, discuss their choice of verbs with them. Are they interesting? Or could some of them use a little spice? If so, have them go back and add some interesting adverbs to their story.

Like last week, focus more on your children's creativity and ideas than their spelling and mechanics. Early on in any language arts course, it can be difficult for children to get "into the groove" of writing. Feel free to point out any errors that you see, but get excited and praise them for their wonderful imaginations. A little positive reinforcement now will do wonders for their confidence.

Have your children record their work under "I Couldn't Believe My Eyes!" on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**.

A sample story might look like this:

Last night I caught my mother's crystal elephant by the kitchen sink. Puzzled, I got my glass of water and started back to bed. As soon as I left the kitchen, I crept back to see if I could uncover the mystery. To my surprise, the glass elephant was alive and using the faucet to wash off. I had wondered how it managed to sparkle so brightly!

1. Psalm 33:1, 3–4 (NIRV®).

2. Clyde Robert Bulla, *Pocahontas and the Strangers*, (Avyx: Littleton, CO, 1988), 44.

3. Dorothy Rhoads, *Corn Grows Ripe*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1993), 44.

How to Evaluate This Week's Assignment

For this assignment, focus on the overall plot and clarity of the story. Can you easily follow the flow of events from beginning to end? Even though it may be unrealistic, the story should make sense to the reader. Look for evidence that your children are choosing words carefully for effect.

The following sample rubric will help you determine how well your children wrote their story. Feel free to adjust the rubric to meet the individual needs of your children. ■

Imaginative Story Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end
_____	5 pts	The story makes sense and is easy to follow (even though it may be unrealistic)
_____	5 pts	The story uses language effectively to describe actions and details
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	The sentences express complete thoughts
_____	5 pts	The story uses correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The story uses appropriate capitalization and punctuation
_____	÷ 30 pts possible = _____ %	
Total pts		



Dictation

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Then, listen to Mom or Dad read the passage below aloud while you record it on a separate sheet of paper.

You who are godly, sing with joy to the Lord. It is right for honest people to praise him. Sing a new song to him. Play with skill, and shout with joy. What the Lord says is right and true. He is faithful in everything he does.¹

Dictation Application

Just as good writers use adjectives to describe nouns, good writers also make their writing more interesting by adding interesting words—called adverbs—to describe their verbs. Adverbs often end with *-ly*. For example, consider these two sentences:

The badger grabbed the sleeping bag and dragged it into the woods.

The badger cunningly grabbed the sleeping bag and gleefully dragged it into the woods.

Do you see how the adverbs *cunningly* and *gleefully* add meaning and interest to the sentence? The badger in the first sentence could be any old run-of-the-mill badger who accidentally stumbles across an abandoned sleeping bag near the woods.

The badger in the second sentence, however, is obviously up to something. Why did he need to be cunning?

Why was he so full of glee? What is he going to do with that sleeping bag? Isn't it amazing how two little adverbs turned a plain sentence into one that makes readers want to know what's going to happen next?

Today you will rewrite a passage adapted from *A Lion to Guard Us*, adding some descriptive adverbs to make the verbs more interesting. Rewrite the following passage, adding some descriptive adverbs to make the verbs more interesting:

She took a step after him, but Cook's voice called her back. "A-man-da." She closed the door. She walked down the long, cold hall and into the kitchen.²

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1. Psalm 33:1, 3-4 (NIV®).

2. Clyde Robert Bulla, *A Lion to Guard Us*, (Harper Trophy: New York, 1989), 5.



Language Arts D: Week 2 Activity Sheet

How Do You Do That?

Write as many **adverbs** (words that describe verbs, often ending in *-ly*) as you can think of to describe each verb listed.

1. Run

2. Jump

3. Laugh

4. Smile

5. Talk

I Couldn't Believe My Eyes!

Last week, you wrote a description of something you could see. This week, your task is to write an exciting story about what you described. Beginning with the words "I couldn't believe my eyes!"; you should spin a short yarn about the amazing things your item did. Feel free to use your imagination.

Did it attack the city at dawn? Maybe it dared to use the express lane at the grocery store—with more than 10 items! Or perhaps it came off the bench to hit a home run and win your little league championship game . . . The possibilities here are endless. You are free to be wildly creative.

On this assignment, focus on telling a story. A good story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. As you think of ideas, consider the order in which events likely occurred. Then, when you begin to write, make sure that you tell their story in a logical order. Also, try to incorporate what you learned about adverbs this week into your assignment. ■

Language Arts D

Days 9–12: Date: _____ to _____

Week Overview																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Week 3					
	Date:	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i>				
HAND-WRITING	Recommended: <i>Handwriting Without Tears</i>				
GRAMMAR	Optional: <i>The Grammar Ace</i>	Lesson 3: Sentences			
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	Optional: <i>Wordly Wise 3000</i> (for books 4–12)	Lesson 2B		Lesson 2C	Lesson 2D
READERS	Regular: <i>Pocahontas and the Strangers</i>	chap. 10	chap. 11	chaps. 12–13	chap. 14
	Advanced: <i>The Corn Grows Ripe</i>	chaps. 13–15			
	Advanced: <i>A Lion to Guard Us</i>		chaps. 1–4	chaps. 5–9	chaps. 10–14
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation	Dictation Application	Simile Showdown	Describe It ...Revisited
Other Notes					

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Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics: Adverbs</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Use similes</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Revise the imaginative story</p>

Creative Expression	
Day 9	Dictation

Read through the dictation passage with your children. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Next, read the dictation as your children write it down on a separate piece of paper.

Blessed are those who are free of pride. They will be given the earth. Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right. They will be filled.¹

Day
9

Optional: Dictation Passage

Regular Readers:

“Our men say John Smith is the leader,” said Hapsis. “Your father does not trust them. If the leader is gone, it will be easier to drive the rest away.”²

Advanced Readers:

The table for the ceremony stood in the center of the room, and on the table were the nine objects that Chan Tata would need during his life—an ax, a machete, a book, a pencil, a prayer book, grains of corn, a pair of sandals, a planting stick, and a piece of money.³

Day
10

Dictation Application

Last week, you and your children discussed how to improve their writing by using adverbs to describe verbs in greater detail. Today, they will learn how adverbs can also modify adjectives and other adverbs.

Using the lines under “Dictation Application” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**, ask your children to rewrite the example sentences with different adverbs. Your children should feel free to be as creative as they want to be. Changing the meaning of the sentences is fine, as long as they use adverbs appropriately. Here are some examples of how these sentences might be changed:

The very proud badger displayed his loot for all his woodland friends to see.

Two curious squirrels examined the really strange object quite recklessly.

Day
11

Simile Showdown

During the last two weeks, your children have been adding descriptive words to nouns and verbs to make their writing more interesting. Rather than merely using single descriptive words, however, good writers will also use similes—short phrases that compare two or more things that are otherwise not similar—to enrich their writing. Similes will usually contain the words *like* or *as*.

Similes help readers form mental pictures in their minds. Writers use them in place of adjectives and adverbs to make their descriptions even more interesting.

Guide your children through “Simile Showdown” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**. Challenge them to think of creative similes to replace the descriptive words we have listed.

Possible Answers:

1. FAST: *quick like a bunny*
2. BEAUTIFUL: *pretty as a picture*
3. SKINNY: *thin like a rail*
4. INTELLIGENT: *smart as a whip*
5. UNFRIENDLY: *mean as a snake*

Day
12

Describe It ... Revisited

So far, your children have described and told an exciting story about something they could see. This week, we want them to revisit their previous assignments, combining them into one cohesive story full of descriptive detail. While they're at it, we'd like for them to apply what they learned yesterday about similes and convert a few of their descriptive details into imaginative similes.

Your children may think this sounds like an easy assignment, since they get to use a lot of their work from the past two weeks. They might be surprised, though, to discover what a challenge it can be to edit and combine their previous work in a way that flows well as a new story.

Give them all the help they need to think of similes that will make their descriptions informative and fun to read. What is their item like? It's as tall as what? It's as green as what? It feels slimy like what? Encourage them to build upon their previous descriptions, bringing their item to life in new and inventive ways.

Let your children know that you have confidence in their abilities and that you can't wait to read their new and improved story. After they've finished a rough draft, feel free to work with them on basic mechanics, such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, etc.

Have your children record their work under “Describe It ... Revisited” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Here's what a sample revised story might look like:

Last night, as I wandered into the kitchen for a glass of cool water, I caught my mother's crystal elephant by the sink. Puzzled, I collected my glass of water and started back to bed. As soon as I left the kitchen, I crept back as quietly as a mouse and carefully looked in. I was determined to uncover the mystery. To my enormous surprise, the glass elephant was alive! It used its trunk to pull water from the faucet to wash. No wonder it glistened as brightly as a rainbow!

1. Matthew 5:5–6 (NIRV®).

2. Clyde Robert Bulla, *Pocahontas and the Strangers*, (Avyx: Littleton, CO, 1988), 45.

3. Dorothy Rhoads, *The Corn Grows Ripe*, (Puffin Books: New York, NY, 1993), 67.

How to Evaluate This Week's Assignment

For this assignment, look for clear improvements on the previous writing. Did your children blend descriptions with actions effectively? Does the story still make sense? Does it give the reader a clear picture in their mind? Determine whether the similes used help to illustrate the story, rather than distract the reader.

The following sample rubric will help you determine how well your children wrote their story. Feel free to adjust the rubric to meet the individual needs of your children. ■

Descriptive Story Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The story makes sense and is easy to understand
_____	5 pts	The story has a beginning, middle, and end that flow logically
_____	5 pts	The story uses language effectively to describe action and details
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	The sentences express complete thoughts
_____	5 pts	The story uses correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The story uses appropriate capitalization and punctuation
_____	÷ 30 pts possible = _____ %	
Total pts		



Dictation

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. Then, listen to Mom or Dad read the passage below aloud while you record it on a separate sheet of paper.

Blessed are those who are free of pride. They will be given the earth. Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for what is right. They will be filled.¹

Dictation Application

Last week, you learned how to improve your writing by using adverbs to describe verbs in greater detail. But guess what? That’s not all the amazing adverb can do!

Adverbs can also modify or describe *adjectives* or other adverbs. For example:

The **extremely** proud badger displayed his loot for all his woodland friends to see.

Two curious squirrels examined the strange object **very** carefully.

In the first sentence, the adverb *extremely* describes the adjective *proud*. In the second sentence, the adverb *very* describes the adverb *carefully*. These words make the sentences more interesting by further describing the adjectives and adverbs they modify.

One note of caution: Like adjectives, adverbs that modify adjectives or other adverbs should be used sparingly. These words can lose their impact if used too often or stressed too greatly. Rewrite the following sentences with different adverbs:

The extremely proud badger displayed his loot for all his woodland friends to see.

Two curious squirrels examined the strange object very carefully.

Simile Showdown

During the last two weeks, you have been adding descriptive words to nouns and verbs to make your writing more interesting. Rather than merely using single descriptive words, however, good writers will also use similes—short phrases that compare two or more things that are otherwise not similar—to enrich their writing. Similes will usually contain the words *like* or *as*. Here are a few examples of similes:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| slippery as an eel | black as night |
| fast like lightning | gentle like a lamb |

Similes help readers form mental pictures in their minds. Writers use them in place of adjectives and adverbs to make their descriptions even more interesting.

Write a simile, a short phrase that compares two or more things that are not similar, for each idea below. Use **like** or **as**.

- Fast

- Beautiful

1. Matthew 5:5–6 (NIRV®).

Section Three

Reading Assignments and Notes

Advanced Readers Program Only: *The Corn Grows Ripe*

ADV.
Day
1

Chapter 1

Setting

Mayan village in Yucatan, Mexico.

For unfamiliar words, please see the glossary at the back of the book.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Who were the members of Dionisio's family?
A: *his mother, father, sister, great-grandmother, and himself [three brothers had died earlier]*
- Q: Where did Dionisio's name come from?
A: *his baptized name came from the saint day; his skin color resembled the Jaguar, and his personality was spirited, mischievous, curious, and lazy*

ADV.
Day
2

Chapters 2-3

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did the Mayan create a new cornfield every few years?
A: *while the soil remained rich, it contained too many weeds to control; the land needed a rest*

The Mayan had two seasons—months of the sun then months of rain.

- Q: Why does the great-grandmother believe Tigre should help his father in the field?
A: *to build his character—to learn to finish his tasks*
- Q: Why does Tigre travel to find the medicine man?
A: *the medicine man is also a bone setter and needs to set Father's broken leg*

ADV.
Day
3

Chapter 4

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why does Tigre hesitate to go to the medicine man?
A: *the distance is far—17 kilometers, he will travel in the dark, and the bush contained evil winds, demons, monsters, and witches*

ADV.
Day
4

Chapter 5

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did Tigre attend school at night?
A: *the government required all children to be literate—if a family did not school their children, their family could receive a stiff fine*
- Q: How did Tigre plan to cover the family's extra financial burdens?
A: *he planned a larger field and planted beans, squash, and chili peppers*

ADV.
Day
5

Chapters 6-7

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did Tigre's search of the chicken coop problem differ from his family's thinking?
A: *he carefully searched for answers, whereas his family accepted the dead chickens as fate*
- Q: Why does Tigre whistle in the milpa?
A: *to call the wind gods to spread the flames from the three fires he set*

ADV.
Day
6

Chapter 8

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did Tigre spend his time before the planting?
A: *making a rope for the celebration, flying kites, playing ball, hunting a small deer*

ADV.
Day
7

Chapters 9-10

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Describe the Holy Cross celebration.
A: *the village was cleaned up, the villagers wore their best clothing, visitors came from all over, music and laughter filled the air, people shot skyrockets, they danced, the boys kept an all night vigil, a bullfight, and the ropes were judged*
- Q: Describe how Tigre planted his field.
A: *he waited for the rain to soften the ground, poked a hole in the ground, and placed corn, beans, and squash seeds in the hole; he then closed the hole with his sandal*

In the desire to please the gods, the medicine man (not a priest) builds an altar and the people offer sacrifices of "sacred water," "sacred bread," wild animals, a ceremonial drink, and a hen from each family. Those that worship and fear the spirits work hard to please them.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Describe the Hetz Mek.

A: *a ceremony performed at 4 months for baby boys and 3 months for baby girls; each child is introduced to the tools he/she will use in life; the god parents attend and all feast afterward*

Q: How did the villagers deal with the drought?

A: *they lit candles, prayed, and made sacrifices to the village santos; after much prayer, the Mayan returned to their old gods and performed the Chac Chac ceremony*

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Describe the ceremony to bring rain.

A: *the medicine man built an altar; all the men attended; the men collected water from a sacred well; the men hung the water on the altar; the men slept near the altar; the people prayed; food was sacrificed; the chosen people acted the parts of a rain storm; the ceremony lasted three days*

Q: Is the Chac a light, gentle rain?

A: *no; strong with thunder*

Q: How did the Mayan store the corn?

A: *they roasted the ears in an earth oven* ■

Advanced Readers Program Only: *A Lion to Guard Us*

ADV.
Day
10

Chapters 1-4

Setting

London to Bermuda to Virginia; 1609.

Overview

After their mother dies in 1609, Amanda, Jemmy, and Meg decide to leave London and follow their father to America. Their ship sails into a fierce storm and they land in Bermuda, not Jamestown. The men build two ships and all eventually sail to Jamestown, where the children find their father.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: The cook thinks their father forgot about them because he hasn't seen them in three years. What do you think?

America is called "the New World" in comparison to Europe (Old World); America represents a new way of life.

Q: Use some descriptive words to describe Amanda.

A: *example: hard-working, compassionate, careful of her siblings, an encourager*

Q: What does this mean? "When you lose someone it's like—like having to find your way again."

Q: What does Amanda plan to do after her mother dies?

A: *find the children's father in America*

Note: There are no notes for chapters 2, 3, and 5—just read and enjoy!

ADV.
Day
11

Chapters 6-9

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Do you think Mistress Trippett stole Amanda's money?

A: *yes: even though she paid the doctor, the medical fees would not equal the price of a house; also, Amanda works hard and that should pay for her shelter and food, but Mistress Trippett pretends the children are a hardship*

Q: Why must the children leave Mistress Trippett's house?

A: *Amanda asks for her money, Mistress Trippett faints, and her son turns the three children out*

Q: Why does the children's father not write to them?

A: *he never learned how to read or write*

Q: What does the doctor mean when he says, "Poor Mistress Trippett with her bags of money—let her keep it all. There's a great world outside, and she'll never know it"?

Note: There are no notes for chapter 7—just read and enjoy!

ADV.
Day
12

Chapters 10-14

Cultural Literacy

Medusa: the devil doll; Medusa was one of the three Gorgons in Greek mythology, and the only mortal Gorgon. Medusa and her two sisters had writhing snakes for hair, staring eyes, hideous grins, and protruding fangs. They were so ugly that anyone who saw them turned to stone. Unlike her sisters, Medusa was beautiful in her youth, and was proud of her hair. She boasted of her beauty to Athena, who became jealous and changed her into a hideous person.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How does the children's dream come true?

A: *Dr. Crider finds them, feeds them and buys the children their tickets and supplies*

Note: There are no notes for chapter 11—just read and enjoy!

To Discuss After You Read

Q: What animals are on the ships? How could each of these animals help Jamestown?

A: *oxen and horses could help plow and clear the land; goats could provide milk; pigs and chickens could serve as food; and chickens could provide eggs*

Q: What sin does Jemmy commit? How does that lead to trouble?

A: *Jemmy's lie makes many people want to steal the door knocker*

Note: There are no notes for chapter 13—just read and enjoy!

ADV.
Day
13

Chapters 15-19

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How does Amanda calm her siblings in the storm?

A: *she tells them a story*

Q: Why can't the children laugh after the storm?

A: *they feel beaten and tired with the sound of the storm still in their ears; they have been through a lot*

Q: What is the plan for rescue? Does it seem reasonable?

A: *send a small boat to fetch a larger boat from Virginia*

Q: What does Meg learn to do while in Bermuda?

A: *play*

Q: What is the fire for and why do the survivors let it go out?

A: *to guide the boat from Virginia; too much time passed and they believe the boat must have sunk*

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why did the men quarrel?

A: *they did not want to build two ships, since some wanted to stay in Bermuda*

Q: What happened to the people at Jamestown?

A: *the English were at war with Native Americans, some were ill, and some starved; many died*

Q: What is another name for “a wall made of tree trunks” that surrounds a town?

A: *fort*

Note: There are no notes for chapter 21—just read and enjoy! ■

REG.
Day
1ADV.
Day
15

Chapter 1

Note to Mom or Dad: Before your children begin reading this book, you may want to point out that it—as, really, every book about Pocahontas—is a work of fiction. Very little is known about Pocahontas. Very little.

A few things we do know.

The name of the man referred to as Powhatan in *Pocahontas and the Strangers* (and almost every book ever written about Pocahontas) was really not Powhatan. Powhatan was the name of a Pamunkey (Indian) village. The name of the man referred to as Powhatan was Wahunsonacock. Wahunsonacock was the Pamunkey tribal chief. He and his family lived in Powhatan. A master of diplomacy, he had negotiated a treaty among 30 Indian tribes so that they had formed what was known as the Algonquian Confederacy. Wahunsonacock was the head of the Confederacy. He was also the father of 20 children, one of whom was Pocahontas.

Pocahontas, it seems, had inherited many of her father's traits. She was a daughter in whom Wahunsonacock confided and placed special trust.

The story about John Smith being “saved” by Pocahontas may or may not be accurate. Historians generally take one of these three positions on the story:¹

Fiction: Smith's first account of being saved or rescued was told 17 years after it was to have happened, in 1624. He had written several times before, about his expedition and meeting of Wahunsonacock, but described being comfortable and treated in a friendly fashion. It has been said that some of his fellow colonists described him as, “an abrasive, ambitious, self-promoting mercenary soldier.”²

True Story: Smith claimed to have written about the event in 1616 in a letter to Queen Anne, wife of King James I; however, this letter has never been found.

Misunderstood Ceremony: Beth Brant suggests that, rather than salvation by an enraptured Pocahontas, “John Smith's so-called rescue was ... a mock execution—a traditional ritual often held after capture of enemies...”³

Pocahontas, of course, played a part in the ritual. She chose to adopt Smith as her brother. Based on subsequent events, it appears that Pocahontas and her father hoped that Pocahontas' adoption of Smith would cement a treaty between the Algonquian Confederacy and the British, a treaty that would enhance the fortunes of all the Indian tribes.

Brant suggests that when John Smith left the Jamestown Colony and returned to England, Pocahontas and her father were greatly angered. Why? “By adopting Smith, ... Pocahontas was, in effect, opening her home and family to him. Smith violated this most basic precept of Indian values by leaving Jamestown without even a goodbye or thank you. To be impolite to an Indian is humiliation to the whole family, clan, and Nation.”⁴

After Smith left, we find that “Pocahontas was sent on varying missions to other Nations by her father. Serving as a spokeswoman for the Algonquian Confederacy, she arranged new trade agreements, cemented old friendships and built new ones. Of this there can be no doubt—Pocahontas was a skilled orator and a politician.”⁵ Later, when she and her father were taken prisoner by the residents of Jamestown, we find Pocahontas again seemingly enamored of white ways. Brant explains her behavior from an Indian perspective: “Bargaining with the British, Pocahontas arranged for her father to be sent home and she would stay to learn more about the [C]hristian way. The accounts given at the time show Pocahontas to be an eager convert. I submit that her conversion to [C]hristianity was only half-hearted, but her conversion to literacy was carried out with powerful zeal.” Indeed, “Pocahontas had her own manifest destiny to fulfill. That of keeping her people alive.”⁶

Brant makes two additional comments that should cause us pause as we interpret Pocahontas' life. “The legend of Pocahontas makes us believe that after marrying Rolfe, she quickly became a lady of leisure, even acquiring the title of Lady Rebecca. I find this choice of names especially intriguing. Did she choose it for herself? In her quest for literacy, the Bible was the only tool she had at that time. Did she read the story of another ... Rebecca when she was told, ‘Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them?’” [Genesis 24:60]⁷

Pocahontas Rebecca had a son, a boy who combined the blood of the British and the Pamunkey, a son who, in Pocahontas Rebecca's eyes, might have been a symbol of hope for future generations of peace between the two peoples. On her dying bed, her last reported words were, “It is enough the child liveth.”

Alas, it was not enough that Thomas Rolfe survived. As Brant concludes, “The Pamunkey people and ... other southeastern Nations were on the path to extinction.”⁸

—John Holzmann

1. Jone Johnson Lewis, “Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith from Execution,” About.com, <http://womenshistory.about.com/od/mythsofwomenshistory/a/pocahontas.htm>. (Accessed October 2009).

2. “The Pocahontas Myth—Powhatan Renape Nation—the Real Story, Not Disney's Distortion.” Rankokus Indian Reservation, <http://www.powhatan.org/poccc.html>. (Accessed October 2009).

3. Beth Brant, “Grandmothers of a New World,” in Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale, *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1992), 102.

4. *Ibid.*, 103.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 103–104.

7. *Ibid.*, 105.

8. *Ibid.*, 108.

Setting

New England to England; early 1600s.

Overview

Pocahontas, daughter of a Native American king, lives in the early 1600s. When the English land near her home, her father distrusts them, but Pocahontas wants to help. She saves the life of Captain John Smith twice, and brings food to the starving settlement at Jamestown. After rumors of wars and much distrust, the English capture Pocahontas, who goes to live in Jamestown. She learns to act like an Englishwoman and marries an Englishman, John Rolfe, a tobacco-grower. Together with their son they leave for England, where Pocahontas dies.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: What character traits does Pocahontas show when she sets the eagle free?

A: *compassion*

Q: What are “great canoes with wings”?

A: *boats with sails*

REG. Day 2	ADV. Day 15	Chapter 2
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why does Hapsis say there was war between the English and the Native Americans?

A: *the English angered the Native Americans when they tried to take their food, so the Native Americans fought*

Q: What is Powhatan’s plan? Is this wise?

A: *wait to see what the English will do*

REG. Day 3	ADV. Day 16	Chapters 3-4
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: The land where the palefaces build is both good and bad. Why?

A: *good because the water is deep and the ships can come close; bad because it is low, wet, and has flies and mosquitoes*

Q: What new things does Pocahontas see on her trip?

A: *palefaces, clothes, axes, saws, new houses, boats, and guns*

REG. Day 4	ADV. Day 17	Chapter 5
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: Where do the hunters go and why do they go secretly?

A: *to fight the palefaces; so Powhatan can pretend he knows nothing*

REG. Day 5	ADV. Day 17	Chapter 6
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: What do the two peoples trade?

A: *hoses, axes, beads for deer, and turkey*

Q: Why wouldn’t the palefaces trade a gun?

A: *guns kept the palefaces safe*

Q: Why would Powhatan kill his captive Captain John Smith?

A: *without a leader it is easier to drive away the others*

REG. Day 6	ADV. Day 17	Chapter 7
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: Describe how Pocahontas saves Captain John Smith’s life.

REG. Day 7	ADV. Day 18	Chapter 8
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: Some Indians were angry that John Smith lived and others were glad. Why did they have different perspectives?

A: *some thought the white men were enemies and should be killed, others were glad to trade*

REG. Day 8	ADV. Day 18	Chapter 9
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why are the warriors angry?

A: *they were unimpressed with Smith’s gifts for saving his life; they were too heavy, and very little they could carry*

REG. Day 9	ADV. Day 19	Chapter 10
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To Discuss After You Read

Q: How did Indian life differ from a Jamestown’s settler’s life?

A: *the settlers built heavy permanent structures and didn’t plan well for their future; the Indians lived off the land in homes that moved easily, they had enough food to share; the settlers had no women or children*

Q: Why is the fact that the palefaces brought firesticks to the village such an insult?

A: *it shows lack of trust*

REG. Day 10	ADV. Day 19	Chapter 11
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Pocahontas puzzles over Smith’s words, “A man who has much gold is rich.” Why do you think she is puzzled?
- Q: Why is Powhatan angry with the English?
- A: *he always gives; they always take but give nothing in return and the palefaces don’t keep their promises*

REG. Day 11	ADV. Day 19	Chapter 12
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why does Powhatan forbid Pocahontas to help the settlers with their gardens?
- A: *the palefaces abuse her people, they will grow strong, take Indian land, and he does not trust them*

REG. Day 11	ADV. Day 20	Chapter 13
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What gifts do the English bring to Powhatan? Why?
- A: *bed, crown, robe, copper jug, and bowl; to get more furs and food (and maybe to mock)*
- Q: What gifts does Powhatan give the English? Why?
- A: *old fur cloak, old shoes, and a few baskets of corn; to show Powhatan’s disdain*

REG. Day 12	ADV. Day 20	Chapter 14
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did the English get the food they needed?
- A: *since they didn’t prepare well for winter, they stole it from the Indian people*

REG. Day 13	ADV. Day 20	Chapter 15
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Explain how the English feel about Powhatan’s food, and how Powhatan feels about their treachery.
- A: *English need food and will kill and steal to get it; Powhatan angrily wants to kill Smith and the others—his people need their food*

REG. Day 13	ADV. Day 21	Chapter 16
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How does Pocahontas rebel against her family?
- A: *she warns Captain John Smith of coming treachery*

REG. Day 14	ADV. Day 21	Chapter 17
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What happened to Captain John Smith?
- A: *in a fire, he had a hole burned in his side*
- Q: Why did Powhatan’s people move?
- A: *the palefaces stole from them at gun point and seemed to be everywhere with their firesticks*

REG. Day 15	ADV. Day 21	Chapter 18
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Should Pocahontas have trusted Captain Argall?
- A: *no—he tricks her*

REG. Day 16	ADV. Day 22	Chapter 19
--------------------------	--------------------------	------------

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why is Pocahontas kidnapped?
- A: *to force her father to give back English prisoners and guns he captured*

REG. Day 17	ADV. Day 22	Chapter 20
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How does Pocahontas try out English life?
- A: *she wears dresses and braids her hair; she speaks English, she helps with chores and she enjoys the girls she lives with*

REG. Day 18	ADV. Day 23	Chapter 21
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why does Pocahontas decide to stay in Jamestown?
- A: *she has no family or friends back in the village, she feels badly that her father didn’t ransom her, and she has friends*

Note: There are no notes for Chapter 22—just read and enjoy!

REG. Day 19	ADV. Day 23	Chapter 23
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To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What is Rolfe’s popular crop in London?
- A: *tobacco*
- Q: Why does Pocahontas decide to go to England?
- A: *her husband wants her to meet his family*

REG.
Day
19

ADV.
Day
24

Chapter 24

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Does Pocahontas like England? Do the people treat her well?
- A: *no, it is rainy and she sees many poor people; Rolfe's family does, but many do not*

REG.
Day
20

ADV.
Day
24

Chapter 25

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why is Pocahontas angry with Captain John Smith?
- A: *he left her and forgot her even though she cared so deeply for him* ■

Section Four

Instructor's Guide Resources

Language Arts D—Scope and Sequence Schedule for Topics and Skills

Week	Dictation Application (Mechanics)	Activity Sheet/Creative Expression
1	basic rules of sentences, nouns; adjectives (articles)	Using the Five Senses/Adjectives Descriptive Paragraph
2	adverbs; modify verbs	Verbs & Adverbs Exciting story about topic described in Week 1
3	adverbs; modify adjectives and other adverbs	Similes Convert writing from Week 1 & 2 into a story, add similes
4	word choice (use specific nouns), synonyms	Using the Five Senses Story-Starter picture-short story
5	adverbs of time and place	Poetry; Rhyming Patterns; Quatrains Write a limerick; Write a free verse poem
6	helping verbs; verb tense	Outlines; Mind Map Write an expository paragraph
7	implied subject—understood you	Analyze character—Pocahontas; Outlines Write a character sketch
8	writing numbers	Literary Hooks Write a recollective paragraph
9	verb usage: singular has an -s, plurals do not	Imagery; Use simile Story-Starter Picture-short story
10	pronouns & antecedents	Point-of-view, journal writing Narration; Summarization; Public Speaking
11	interpret proverbs; subjects & predicates (complete, compound, simple)	Research; Biography Writing Write rough draft; Write biography
12	hyphenate line breaks	Writing on a Theme Turn outline into rough draft; Final draft
13	subject/object/personal & possessive pronouns	Research; Informative Writing Select topic; Library visit; Note cards
14	similes and metaphors	Internet Research; Outlines Organize note cards into an outline
15	combine short sentences	Rough Draft Writing; Bibliography; Report Writing; Hook Writing; Public Speaking
16	comma review: series, numbers, city/state, etc.	Active & Passive Voice; Teaching Methods Brainstorm; Character Sketch
17	comparative adjectives, superlative adjectives; adverbs	Outlines; Speech Drafting; Public Speaking Describe a room with 5 senses; Gen. G. Washington Thank You speech to Phoebe
18	quotations and attribution	Palindromes; Biography Writing Research person
19	dialogue	Dialogue; Research Write mini-report rough draft; Write mini-report final draft

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(continued on the following page)

Week	Dictation Application (Mechanics)	Activity Sheet/Creative Expression
20	linking verbs; predicate nouns; predicate adjectives	Summarization Define “faith”; Write commercial
21	prepositions, objects of the preposition, prepositional phrases	Active Voice; Passive Voice; Persuasive Writing
22	irregular verbs	Voice—Eliminating “be” Verbs Write down words of wisdom; Retell a story orally
23	subject; predicate; vary sentence lengths	Research; Explanatory Writing Write preamble to family bylaws; write explanation of how Constitution was created
24	plural nouns: -s, -es, -ies	Imagery Story-Starter Picture-short story
25	contractions	Imaginative Writing Write a short journal entry; Write a descriptive paragraph
26	abbreviations—states/addresses; titles	Homophones Write a “thank you note”
27	compound words; compound adjectives	Free Verse Poetry; Limericks; Cinquain Compose a 5-line poem Creative word choice
28	capitalization	Newspaper Production Draft a newspaper human interest article; Write a newspaper editorial
29	possessives (‘s, s’); singular and plural nouns	Emotional Narration Write a “pros and cons” list; Write a compare/contrast paper
30	roots, prefixes and suffixes	Personification; Maxims Write a paragraph explaining a maxim
31	run-on sentences; rambling sentences	Reflective writing; Imaginative Writing; Brainstorming Story-Starter—write the back cover copy for a book cover
32	abbreviations	Picturesque Details Write a paper on why Robert Fulton had a heart of a learner
33	acronyms/initialisms	Dialogue; Character Traits Write dialogue; Write a 5 paragraph essay
34	commas: after introductory words, with noun of direct address	Persuasive Writing; Critical Writing Write a book review
35	simple sentences, compound sentences, coordinating conjunctions	Synonyms; Brainstorming; Imaginative Writing Write about a prompted imaginary situation
36	season description	Similarities/Differences Chart; Essay Writing Write a compare/contrast essay

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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 children. 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 children, 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 the grammar and mechanical skills they 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.

If you start to feel like this slower paced method might jeopardize the variety of assignments your students are exposed to, or causes you to miss assignments you think your students might enjoy, use the Scope and Sequence list in **Section Four** to help you vary the assignments and select a more appropriate topic from another week. At this age, we want writing to be enjoyable, so select topics you think will most inspire your students. And remember, the more practice they get recording their thoughts on paper, the easier it will be for them when they're older and do need to produce polished work on a deadline.

*Relax, slow
down, and
write at a pace
that is fun.*

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 handwriting paper, or by skipping every other line on notebook paper 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 child 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. For now, your students probably speak better than they write. They form sentences correctly and can “hear” when something isn’t right, so simply help them align their writing to their speaking proficiency. More importantly, praise them when they catch and correct their own mistakes.

For example you might say “Oh! You just paused there, what kind of punctuation do you think you might need?” or “Let’s sound out the spelling of ‘incredible’ together.” Or, “let’s look that word up in the dictionary...” Practice review skills together that you’d like them to be able to use on their own later. Also, help them think through holes in their description or story line. If you see a conspicuous gap, ask them to stop reading and ask them questions about the story that any interested reader would have. If they can tell you answers that help to fill the gap, help them write a few sentences to include this information in the story for other readers to enjoy.

Simply modeling the right way to do something is a very effective teaching tool at this age. When you find mistakes in their written work, pick and choose which ones you want them to help you correct, but sometimes simply demonstrate the right way to spell something or word a phrase in a sentence by quietly writing it on their paper as they read. Remember, they’ll see your correction and write it correctly when they rewrite their final drafts, so the more you can make your review session about showing you value what they created and less about making a big deal over every mistake, the more they’ll enjoy reviewing their papers with you...and the more they’ll like the writing process.

Think about how you’d like each child to handle words they repeatedly misspell. If it’s a word like “said” that they will use frequently now and in the future, you may ask them to rewrite it correctly on their rough draft each time it appears to help them memorize the correct spelling. If the word is lengthy, correct the spelling together for the first instance, and then simply circle the misspelled word each time it appears so they know to reference the first time you corrected it when they write the rough draft.

We strongly encourage you to review your students’ writing with them, rather than edit it yourself and hand it back to them later. By walking your students through the editing

Coach the writing process and edit as a team.

process each time, you will teach them how to edit and revise their own papers, how to catch their own mistakes, and how to look up correct answers on their own. As the old adage goes: “Give a man a fish and you’ll feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you’ll feed him for a lifetime.” By working with your students to edit and revise, you’ll be teaching them to fish, or, more accurately: to write!

How DO I Evaluate Writing Assignments?

Using Sonlight’s Rubrics

We understand that the idea of evaluating your students’ 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 coached their progress along the way. Feel free to adjust or modify our rubrics at any time if you feel your child 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

At this age, we want to emphasize the writing *process* more than the final result. Do you remember when they were learning to talk? If you pointed to that colorful floating orb in the sky and said “Look, a balloon!” and they repeated “Bay-yoon!” did you correct their pronunciation and then give them a bad grade? Probably not. We hope you laughed, and simply said it again the right way. Even if they called it a “bay-yoon” for the next three months, we imagine you simply kept presenting them with the correct pronunciation and eventually they learned it.

Please think of learning to write as “learning to speak on paper.” Since hopefully your students have had a few years to practice writing by this point, it’s okay to start honing their technique. Strive to teach your students with the same small steps, and the same gentle redirections—slowly, over time. Be careful not to expect too much too quickly. It will come. Celebrate the small accomplishments, and keep engaging your students with examples of good writing (just like the ones in the books you’re reading), and talk about what could be improved when you come across lesser samples.

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Creating your own Rubrics

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.

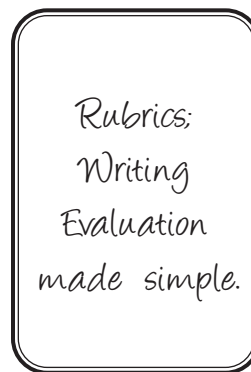
When you create a rubric, first draft a list of all the things you hope the assignment will accomplish, or you hope your child will learn or practice as they complete the assignment. Sometimes it's helpful to list skills by category, so you're sure you've thought of everything you want to evaluate.

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 to determine the number of points that will equal 100%. After that, simply read through your students' 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.

Sample Rubric		
Content		
_____	5 pts	Presented a clean, polished, final copy
_____	5 pts	Successfully revised the description from Week 1
_____	5 pts	Included at least 1 simile
Mechanics		
_____	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		

When 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 in the future when they work on writing assignments.

At this age, you may be able to let your students write their first drafts independently, but they will probably still benefit from an "Editorial Review" session with you before they draft their final copies. Later in the year, you might



put together an Editing Checklist with your students if you'd like them to begin editing their own papers independently as well. 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 children 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 Four**. 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! ■

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