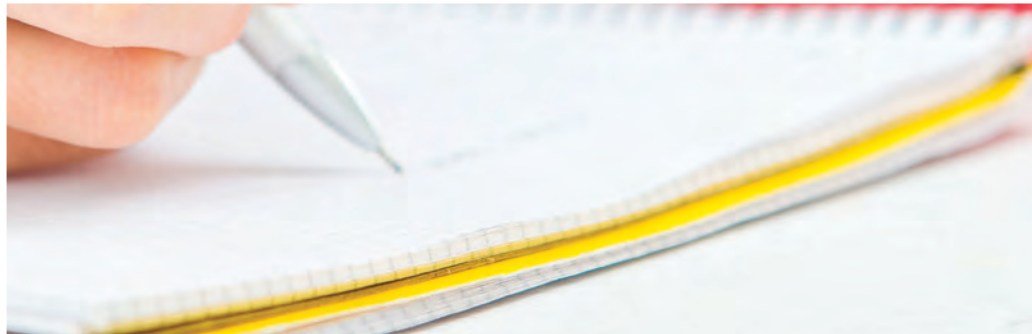


F

LANGUAGE ARTS



Spelling
Grammar
Dictation
Vocabulary
Writing Mechanics
Research Writing
Creative Expression
Literary Analysis





Thank you for downloading this sample of Sonlight's Language Arts F 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 (4-Day)

Language Arts F

By the Sonlight Team

*“Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it”*

Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)

Sonlight Curriculum® “Language Arts F” (4-Day) Instructor’s Guide,
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 F” (4-Day) Instructor’s Guide. 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 F”—Book List
- 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 F”
Schedule and Notes

3 Reading Assignments and Notes

- 1 Readers Study Guide

4 Appendices

- 1 Language Arts F—Scope and Sequence:
Schedule for Topics and Skills
- 5 Appendix 2: Recommendations for Teaching
Writing
- 9 Appendix 3: Grammar Guide
- 37 Appendix 4: List of Standard Symbols
- 39 Appendix 5: How to Do a Research Project

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>I Can Read It!</i> Word Lists	Lesson 18			
	Phonics Activities		Form Words	Play Concentration	
	Optional: <i>Explode the Code 2</i>	pp. 55-56	p. 57	p. 58	p. 59
HAND-WRITING	<i>Handwriting Without Tears: My Printing Book</i>	p. 50		p. 51	
READERS	<i>I Can Read It!</i> 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
Other Notes:					

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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: 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 Language 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
- 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.

Mechanics Practice

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 Four**.

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.

Grammar

We recommend *Grammar Ace* for one year between 4th–7th grade. This self-paced grammar supplement contains a progressive journey through only the most practical grammar your children need and makes a great addition to Sonlight’s Language Arts. Once you have finished *Grammar Ace*, we recommend you choose either *Grammar 5 & 6* with *Winston Grammar* **or** *Keys to Good Language*, but not both as the programs teach using a different format and lesson progression. Use the space on the Schedule page to record what you have done.

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! ■

Level F: Language Arts

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: Grammar 6</i> ¹	Sheet 1		Sheet 2	
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	<i>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000</i> ¹ (for books 4–12)	Lesson 1A		Lesson 1B	Lesson 1C
READERS	<i>Li Lun, Lad of Courage</i> ²	pp. 11–33	pp. 34–53	pp. 54–77	pp. 78–96
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation & Mechanics Practice	The Purpose of Writing	Observation	Observation Essay
<i>Additional Subjects:</i>					

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

Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Nouns—gender; concrete/abstract; compound; collective</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Sensory details</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write an observation essay about something that interests you</p>

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Spelling You See

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 Parental Notes

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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](https://www.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.

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.

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.

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 F 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 writing all week long. To keep things interesting and to offer a broad range of skill practice, this writing practice varies throughout the week. On the first day of the week, you may choose to have 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. On the remaining days of the week, 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 and, 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

Each week, 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 after each weekly 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.

Creative Expression

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 aloud the passage to your children as they write it down on a separate piece of paper.

He stood up and shouldered the bundles again, happy that he was toiling up the mountain instead of sailing over the sea. The rocks were at peace among themselves; the waves were not.¹

1. *Carolyn Treffinger, Li Lun, Lad of Courage*, (Walker & Company: New York, 1995), 27.

Mechanics Practice

Today your children will learn about **common** and **proper nouns**, the **gender of nouns** (*feminine, masculine, neuter, and indefinite*), concrete and abstract nouns, compound nouns, and collective nouns. See the **Week 1 Activity Sheet** for more information. If your children have trouble distinguishing all of the nouns from the passage, have them look up words they are uncertain about in the dictionary.

Answers:

1. **Common Nouns:** *bundles, mountain, sea, rocks, peace, waves*; **Proper Nouns:** *none*.
2. *All of the nouns in the passage are neuter—they are all objects or ideas, which are neither male nor female.*

Day
1

Optional: Dictation

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.

“And you think you are a coward,” the priest said kindly. “You have tended the rice, you have watered it faithfully, you have guarded it from the birds... You are no coward! You are brave, Li Lun. Braver than if you had gone fishing.”²

Day
2

The Purpose of Writing

This year your child will compile their writing assignments and other Language Arts work into a sketchbook. The Activity Sheets included with this Instructor’s Guide, collected in a separate binder, will provide the 36-week organizational selection for their sketchbooks. Have your children include assignments they complete on a separate sheet of paper by filing them behind the appropriate week’s Activity Sheets. Today your children will begin their sketchbook by conducting a self-interview. See “The Purpose of Writing” on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet** for more information.

Day
3

Observation

This week your children will write an Observation Essay. Today they will simply observe something that interests them and take notes on it, jotting down sensory details they can use as they write the essay tomorrow. See “Observation” on **Week 1 Activity Sheet** for more information.

2. *Ibid*, 60.

Today your children will use the notes from their observation to write a simple essay. See “Observation Essay” on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**.

We provide an example to help guide your children’s writing, as well as your efforts to evaluate their work. Use our examples as a rough guide to help your children generate ideas and as an approximation of what we expect the end product of a particular assignment to look like.

I think the neighbor’s cat lost at least one of her nine lives today. Fluffy is her name. Stalking birds is her game.

As I sat by my window typing merrily away, I caught sight of Fluffy walking slowly across the backyard. She crouched low to the ground and stared straight ahead with an eerie intensity. Her nose twitched as it searched for the scent of her prey.

I glanced over to see her likely quarry a few yards away. A large woodpecker with a bright scarlet head sat peacefully poking at a nut it had found in the woods. As Fluffy got closer, it must have picked up on the sound of Fluffy’s paws crunching dry leaves on the ground.

As Fluffy sprang into attack mode, the woodpecker flew in a quick circle and bopped Fluffy repeatedly on the head with its sharp beak. Fluffy screamed in pain and ran home with her tail between her legs.

It pays to be observant. If I hadn’t noticed the scene unfolding in front of me, I never would’ve been able to help my neighbors figure out why Fluffy needed stitches!

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 essays to you and ensure they have an introduction, body, conclusion, and sensory details. If you’d like, you can also go back and work with them on the basic mechanics: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Did they include sensory details from multiple senses in their essay? 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**. ■

Sample Rubric for Observational Essay		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	Wrote an observational essay about a topic of interest
_____	5 pts	Included various sensory details
_____	5 pts	Included an introduction, body, and conclusion
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	Worked with Mom or Dad to edit this assignment
_____	5 pts	Used the dictionary to research the spelling of a word
_____ ÷ 25 pts possible = _____%		
Total pts		



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 aloud while you write it on a separate sheet of paper.

He stood up and shouldered the bundles again, happy that he was toiling up the mountain instead of sailing over the sea. The rocks were at peace among themselves; the waves were not.¹

Mechanics Practice

By now we imagine that you know a **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing, or idea, such as Pittsburgh, or Mary, or The Statue of Liberty, and **common nouns** do not name something specific: tomato, pencil, park. Proper nouns are always capitalized, whereas common nouns are not.

Did you know that nouns can also denote **gender**? Nouns can be *feminine, masculine, neuter, or indefinite*. For example:

Noun Type	Example:
Feminine: (female)	mother, aunt, hen, waitress
Masculine: (male)	father, uncle, rooster, waiter
Neuter: (neither male nor female)	table, lamp, car
Indefinite: (either male or female)	teacher, children, horse

Nouns may either be **concrete** objects (like a *pool* or a *trampoline*) or an **abstract** idea (like love, sadness, or justice). **Compound nouns** are made up of two or more words (like *football, step-sister, or middle school*), and a **collective noun** names a specific kind of group (like a *gaggle, herd, or team*).

1. Take a moment to underline all of the nouns in the Dictation passage above. If you find a proper noun, underline it twice.

1. Carolyn Treffinger, *Li Lun, Lad of Courage*, (Walker & Company: New York, 1995), 27.

2. Once the nouns are underlined, label the gender of each one. Use **F** for feminine, **M** for masculine, **N** for neuter and **I** for indefinite.
3. Think of your own example for each of the following type of nouns:

concrete: _____

abstract: _____

compound: _____

collective: _____

Did you know ... that writers use **personification**, a form of figurative language, to help them describe and create images for their readers? In literature, personification means that an animal or an object has human characteristics. Read this week’s passage again. What does it mean that the rocks were at peace among themselves and the waves were not? How can rocks have peace? How does this help describe the setting and Li Lun’s emotion? If you close your eyes, you may be able to imagine the calm rocks stacked against each other and the waves crashing and fighting. Li Lun feels calm with the rocks because they are still, and the land is solid. He doesn’t like the water because the waves are always moving, so he can’t trust the water because he doesn’t know what to expect.

The Purpose of Writing

Why do people write? Why should you write? Writing is an important form of communication that you use to connect to other people and yourself. Because of the recent advancements in electronic communication, you will probably find more reasons to write as an adult than your mom or dad do now.

Many businesses communicate electronically and advertise through web sites. If you get involved in business as you grow older, you will need to write clearly and precisely when delivering vital information or you may write for entertainment and enjoyment.

Your job this year is to learn new writing strategies and work to apply them to your writing. You will write fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. But where will you get your ideas? How will you know what to write?



The Sketchbook: Many artists keep a sketchbook and record their ideas in order to remember what they have seen and observed. They write their ideas down, so that they do not forget them. Sculptors, jewelry makers, fashion designers, and architects keep some type of file or notebook to help them develop new and original ideas. Writers are artists, too. As an artist, you will keep a sketchbook to help you develop your ideas. Not everything you collect will be developed into formal writing, but your collection will inspire your writing.

1. The Activity Sheets will serve as the basic skeleton for this year's sketchbook. We recommend you put the Activity Sheets in a separate binder. That way you can insert additional pages of completed assignments after each week's Activity Sheet, and compile your sketchbook as you work throughout the year. Continue to add to your sketchbook anytime you find something that you like. Strive to observe and be aware of the world around you. Cut out articles, pictures, photos, headlines, or phrases. If you hear song lyrics or if someone says something unusual, write it in your sketchbook. If you learn something interesting in math, history, science, or foreign language, write it down. Entries for your sketchbook can come from anywhere. Language Arts is not your only source for ideas.

2. For your sketchbook's inaugural activity, conduct an interview with yourself to record who you are today. When you look back at your sketchbook in weeks and years to come, this self-interview will provide context to the rest of the writing assignments in your sketchbook. The interview will help you remember why you wrote and thought in a certain way.

To conduct the interview, answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper. Include any other facts you find important or interesting about who you are today.

- I. How would others describe me?
- II. How do I get along with members of my family?
- III. If I could take three people with me on a trip to the moon, I would take:
- IV. What do I want to do with my life?
- V. What is my favorite school subject? Why?
- VI. What things do I enjoy doing the most?
- VII. If I could make one change in the world I would:
- VIII. What special talents or skills do I use well?
- IX. What special talents or skills would I like to have?
- X. Other people say that I am good at:

Observation

This week your task is to write an Observation Essay in which you describe something you've observed. Try to include sensory details and things you've observed with each of your five senses. Today, select something that interests you. Observe and take notes as you observe it. Don't worry about writing complete sentences yet—you will turn your notes into sentences tomorrow. Simply jot down a few words that will help you remember what you observed. Be sure to pay attention to what your senses tell you as you observe and make notes that will help you tomorrow.

Observation Essay

Today you will use the notes you took yesterday to write your Observation Essay. Write the observation as it played out like a short story and be sure to include the sensory details you made note of yesterday. To give your essay a little structure, include an introduction and a conclusion. In your introductory paragraph, define the essay's focus. Present the main idea of the story you're about to tell in the rest of the essay. In the last paragraph—the conclusion—tell what you learned from your observation. Is there something you can accomplish with this observation? Decide on your audience. Who will be interested in reading your observation? Write as though you are talking to them.

Level F: Language Arts

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: Grammar 6</i>	Sheet 3		Sheet 4	
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	<i>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000 (for books 4–12)</i>	Lesson 1D		Lesson 1E	Lesson 2A
READERS	<i>Sweet and Sour: Tales From China</i>	pp. 63–65; pp. 14–17; pp. 39–41; pp. 80–85; pp. 89–91; pp. 21–22	pp. 33–38; pp. 66–72; pp. 86–88	pp. 49–59; pp. 60–62; pp. 106–107; pp. 98–99; p. 13; pp. 42–44	pp. 45–48; pp. 78–79; pp. 18–20; pp. 23–29; pp. 30–32
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation & Mechanics Practice	Outline for the Definition Essay	The Definition Essay	Revise
Additional Subjects:					

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Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Hyphens and dashes</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p>Skill: Use an outline to organize an essay</p> <p>Assignment: Write a definition essay</p>

Creative Expression	
Day 5	Dictation
<p>Read through the dictation passage with your children. Work with them to note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. On the fifth day, you will read the passage aloud and have your children write it on a separate sheet of paper.</p>	

The family pig, the three ducklings, and the little stone mill to grind the rice for the baby sister—these they had saved from the mud house of the family of Tien that had stood a little beyond their village of The-Corner-of-the-Mountains-Where-the-Rivers-Meet. Besides these they had saved absolutely nothing, except Beauty-of-the-Republic, Tien Pao's baby sister.¹

Mechanics Practice

Today your children will learn about **hyphens** and **dashes**. For more information, see the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**.

Answers:

- straw | berry con | trary
 am | big | u | ous hon | or | ary
- To indicate a sudden break or change in the sentence

Day 6 Optional: Dictation

Li Lun raised his eyes to the heavens. The sun had not yet risen, but how beautiful the sky! Purple and blue changing to red, to pink. Dawn had not yet reached its fingers to the island below. Gray mist shadows from the sea blanketed it. But here on the mountain-top the light of dawn touched everything!²

Day 6 Outline for the Definition Essay

After a brief discussion with you about connotation and denotation (see the Activity Sheet), today your children will complete the **outline** on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet** to compile their thoughts for the Definition Essay on courage they will write this week. They will probably need to use the internet for some light research. See “Outline for the Definition Essay” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet** for more information.

Day 7 The Definition Essay

Today your children will use the outline they completed yesterday to write their Definition Essay. Help them see how each section of the outline will translate into a paragraph into their essay—they simply have to turn the thoughts they recorded into complete sentences. For more information, see “The Definition Essay” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**.

Day 8 Revise

Today your children will call on you to help them revise their Definition Essay. After they read their paper to you, help them see where they should add information to make their message more clear. Finally, they can use the Revision Checklist on the Activity Sheet to finish polishing their work. For more information, see “Revise” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**.

Here’s what a brief sample of a definition essay about courage might look like:

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear [it].” 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

I always think of this verse when I hear the word “courage.” Sometimes I think courage is nothing more than our own self-image catching up to what God already knows about us.

Recently, a friend learned that he has inoperable cancer. He quickly experienced the various stages of depression and settled into a comfortable role of “getting on with life and dealing with it.” He stopped asking why God would allow this to happen to him. ■

Definition Essay Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____ 5 pts	The essay is interesting with an attention-grabbing introduction	
_____ 5 pts	Organization includes a beginning, middle, and end	
_____ 5 pts	All paragraphs focus on one main idea	
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____ 5 pts	The essay uses correct capitalization and punctuation	
_____ 5 pts	The essay includes interesting and descriptive words	
_____ 5 pts	The sentences contain complete thoughts	
_____ ÷ 30 pts possible = _____ %		
Total pts		

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1. Meindert DeJong, *House of Sixty Fathers*, (HarperTrophy: New York, 1987), 3.

2. Carolyn Treffinger, *Li Lun, Lad of Courage*, (Walker & Company: New York, 1995), 27.

**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 aloud while you write it on a separate sheet of paper.

The family pig, the three ducklings, and the little stone mill to grind the rice for the baby sister—these they had saved from the mud house of the family of Tien that had stood a little beyond their village of The-Corner-of-the-Mountains-Where-the-Rivers-Meet. Besides these they had saved absolutely nothing, except Beauty-of-the-Republic, Tien Pao's baby sister.¹

Mechanics Practice

Do you remember the difference between a hyphen and a dash? A **hyphen** is a short little line (like this: -) that writers use to divide a word between two lines of text. Often, word processing software will automatically insert hyphens for you as you type, but how does it know where to split a word? We insert hyphens between syllables, which makes the word easier to read when it is printed on two lines. Therefore, you will never see the word “that” or “you” hyphenated. If you need help knowing where the syllable breaks at, check a dictionary. A great place to insert a hyphen is often between the double letters. For example:

Pep-per col-lege

A **dash** (or **em dash**) is a longer line (like this: —) that is somewhat of a cross between a comma, a colon, and an ellipsis. Here are a few of the ways it can be used:

☆ **To indicate a sudden break or change in the sentence.** Notice how the dashes are like parentheses here:

At the same time—and this was totally unplanned—Amy and I opened our sodas.

☆ **For emphasis:**

She was sunburned—and I mean crispy—from head to toe.

☆ **To show interrupted speech:**

“Well, I—ah—you see,” stammered Duane.

1. Draw lines (|) to show where you could insert hyphens to split the words below. Generally speaking, it's best not to hyphenate a word to leave a single letter alone on a line.

strawberry contrary
ambiguous honorary

2. Find the dash in this week's dictation passage. Why did the author include a dash?

Outline for the Definition Essay

Words can have the same meaning, but express different feelings. The same thing is true with concepts. Ideas like *security*, *happiness*, or *luxury* may have precise denotations, but they can transfer different connotations to different people. One person may think that *security* means to have police protection, while another person may feel that *security* means to have enough money to pay the bills.

Look at the groups of words below. Each group has the same denotation or dictionary meaning. Discuss the feelings or connotations that each word has with Mom or Dad. Are some more positive than others? If so, why?

1. clever, smart, brilliant, cunning
2. fancy, elegant, frilly, showy
3. different, unusual, bizarre, weird
4. special, distinguished, particular, unique
5. command, invitation, order, plea
6. lean, slant, tilt, recline
7. copy, imitate, mimic, shadow
8. banquet, cookout, feast, potluck
9. car, vehicle, limousine, wagon
10. song, hymn, melody, tune

1. Meindert DeJong, *House of Sixty Fathers*, (HarperTrophy: New York, 1987), 3.



Courage is a major theme in your Readers this year. What does courage mean to you? This week you will write a definition essay for the word *courage*. In a definition essay, you explain what a term means to you. Use the outline below to outline your essay. Use a separate piece of paper.

- I. Introduction
 - A. Denotation (definition of the word *courage*):
 - B. Interesting "attention-grabber" about courage (story, article summary, quote, etc):
 - C. How I feel about *courage*:
- II. Body Paragraph #1:
 - My definition of *courage*:
- III. Body Paragraph #2:
 - A description of someone I know who is courageous according to my definition:
- IV. Body Paragraph #3:
 - Why my example person is courageous:
- V. Conclusion:
 - Compare and contrast your personal definition of courage to the dictionary definition. How are they alike? How do they differ?

The Definition Essay

Use the outline you completed yesterday to help you write the first draft of your definition essay. Who is your audience? Are you writing for your friends, your teacher, a general audience?

Write an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. In your introduction, catch your readers' attention with a quotation, part of a song lyric, or any other interesting fact about courage. Then, include the dictionary meaning and tell your readers how you feel about courage.

For the body paragraphs, describe what courage means to you. Follow the outline to include not only your personal definition, but also a description of someone you know who is courageous (or you have read about). The final body paragraph should explain why the person you chose for your example fits your definition of courage.

Finally, compare your personal definition of courage to the denotative meaning of the term in your conclusion. What did you learn about courage?

Revise

Why revise? Let's say that a friend asks you to draw a picture of him or her. So, the two of you sit down and you draw the picture without erasing anything or starting over. Will the picture be a perfect copy of your friend? You would probably need to erase and revise a few times to create a good likeness of your friend.

Revision applies to writing, too, because even professional writers do not write a perfect composition on the first attempt. You may not always have time to revise every paper that you write this year, but you will need to polish some compositions. Complete the following steps today to revise your Definition Essay.

1. Read your first draft aloud to your mom or dad. Listen to the flow of the words. How does it sound? Stop and make notes on your paper of any errors that you heard during your reading.
2. Next, have your mom or dad ask you questions about your paper. Are those questions answered in your paper? Do you need to add details? Stop and make notes on your paper to add details. What feeling do you get from the overall paper? How would you like your readers to feel after reading your paper? Does your paper contain that emotion? Replace words with synonyms that provide the correct connotations.
3. Finally, use the revision checklist below to check the rest of your work. Make corrections and write a final draft.

Revision Checklist

- ____ Ideas are interesting
- ____ Organization includes a beginning, middle, and end
- ____ Uses correct spelling
- ____ Words are descriptive
- ____ Uses complete sentences
- ____ Uses capitals correctly

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Level F: Language Arts

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	<i>Recommended: Handwriting Without Tears</i>				
GRAMMAR	<i>Optional: Grammar 6</i>	Sheet 5		Sheet 6	
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	<i>Optional: Wordly Wise 3000 (for books 4–12)</i>	Lesson 2B		Lesson 2C	Lesson 2D
READERS	<i>Sweet and Sour: Tales From China</i>	pp. 73–77; pp. 92–97; pp. 100–105; pp. 108–112			
	<i>The Year of the Dog</i>		chaps. 1–6	chaps. 7–12	chaps. 13–18
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation & Mechanics Practice 	Tone	Create Tone	Tone in a Scary Story
Additional Subjects:					

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Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Adjectives—definition; articles; proper and common; compound</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Convey tone in writing</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write a scary story</p>

Creative Expression	
Day 9	Dictation

Read through the dictation passage with your children. Work with them to note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. On the fifth day, you will read the passage aloud and have your children write it on a separate sheet of paper.

 Parental Notes

The mats parted. The golden-haired, blue-eyed god stepped into the sampan. Tien Pao's knees quaked under him, but somehow he managed to take a few steps forward. He almost shoved the little pig into the white one's arms. Then he backed away to the altar again, bowing deeply to the god as he backed toward the god's own altar.¹

Mechanics Practice

Today your children will learn about different types of **adjectives**. They will also briefly review nouns, pronouns and adverbs, which we will discuss more depth later. For more information, see the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Note to Mom or Dad: This year, your children will delve more deeply into the mechanics of the English language, and we'll begin to serve up some rather meaty grammatical topics. To help both of you in your study this year, please see the *Grammar Guide* in **Section Four** that succinctly explains topics we'll discuss for Mechanics Practice. Please keep this appendix handy for reference as you work this year. We hope you make great use of it whenever you need a refresher on any topic.

Answers:

1. Which sentence is better? *Hopefully your children selected the second sentence as the additional adjectives help to paint a clearer picture in the reader's mind.*
2. Adjectives in the Dictation:

Common Adjectives	Proper Adjectives	Compound Adjectives
few	Tien-Pao's	golden-haired
little		blue-eyed
white		
own		

Use tally marks to record the articles you find:

the	a	an
8	1	

Day 9 Optional: Dictation

Tien Pao brought up mud from the bottom of the paddy and plastered his face with the oozy, syrupy, reeking stuff. He rolled himself in it. With bluish, vile mud dripping from him Tien Pao stood up and studied the little pig critically. He was encouraged. The thick mud must fool the spirits! Why, Glory-of-the-Republic looked like nothing but a mud ball with four mud legs. If his own plaster of mud was as good, the mountain spirits wouldn't recognize him as the same scared, weak, hungry boy²

Day 10 Tone

Today you will work with your children to identify tone in various writing samples.

Discuss the quoted passages on the Activity Sheet with your children. After you have discussed a passage, have your children read it aloud; placing emphasis on the appropriate words and phrases.

When you have finished your discussion, have your children complete the "Tone" activity on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Possible answers:

1. *Desperate; Buck was completely at the mercy of his handlers.*
2. *Scared; His terror increased as his pleas went unanswered.*
3. *Frantic; I shall never reach the key and leave this place!*
4. *Sad; With a heavy heart, she lay awake and wished for morning.*
5. *Excited; Her energy caused him to feel quite alert as he sat up in bed.*

Day 11 Create Tone

Today your children will write three paragraphs to portray the tone for their choice of three tone words listed on the Activity Sheet. See "Create Tone" on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet** for more information.

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1. Meindert DeJong, *House of Sixty Fathers*, (HarperTrophy: New York, 1987), 10.

2. Phyllis Thompson, *God's Adventurer: Hudson Taylor*, (OMF International, Littleton, CO, 2014), 31.

Today your children will use what they have learned about connotation and tone to write a short scary story. See “Tone in a Scary Story” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet** for more information. Here’s an example of a brief story about a scary time in my life:

I woke up with a start. Although I usually sleep through the night with no interruptions, something had jarred me from my slumber. What could it have been?

I listened intently. Thunder cracked outside and sheets of rain pounded the window next to my bed. Another May thunderstorm raged outside. But I can sleep through the worst of storms. Something else must be going on, I thought.

As my feet hit the cold floor, a chill ran up my spine. Why was it so cold in my room? I crept downstairs slowly, suddenly very wary of what I might find there.

When I reached the bottom of the landing, I immediately noticed the front door standing ajar. My heart raced as my eyes darted about the room, looking for any sign of a possible intruder.

And there it was! In the corner, a strange creature sat up on its haunches with a piece of leftover pizza clutched in its grubby paws. When I flicked on the lightswitch, I discovered the mess the raccoon had made. The overturned trash can explained what must have caused a sound loud enough to wake me from a deep sleep.

Relief flowed through me, as the raccoon made its way to the front door and back outside. I cleaned up his mess and then hit the hay again. I barely remembered the evening’s excitement when I awoke the following morning.

How to Evaluate This Week’s Assignment

For this week’s assignment, ensure your children wrote a scary story that conveys an appropriate tone to the reader. As your children are still building their vocabulary, give them credit for choosing words that have the correct connotation, but don’t mark them down if not every word is spot-on. If they wrote a scary story that is somewhat creepy, they’ve met the main goals of this assignment.

You may choose to use the sample rubric as-is or modify for your own purposes. If there’s some other skill you’d like to help your child develop, go ahead and add it to the rubric, assigning it a point value. 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 children’s work, thinking about each point on your rubric as you go. Divide the number of points your children earned by the number of points possible to determine a percentage. ■

Scary Story Rubric

Content

_____	5 pts	The narrative includes a beginning, middle, and end
_____	5 pts	Word choice reflects proper connotation
_____	5 pts	Adjectives help illustrate the tone

Mechanics

_____	5 pts	The essay uses correct capitalization and punctuation
_____	5 pts	The essay uses correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The sentences contain complete thoughts

_____ ÷ 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 aloud while you write it on a separate sheet of paper.

The mats parted. The golden-haired, blue-eyed god stepped into the sampan. Tien Pao's knees quaked under him, but somehow he managed to take a few steps forward. He almost shoved the little pig into the white one's arms. Then he backed away to the altar again, bowing deeply to the god as he backed toward the god's own altar.¹

Mechanics Practice

A **noun**, as you probably remember, is a person, place, thing, or idea, and pronouns are words that rename nouns. For example, *he* is a pronoun we can use to refer to someone named *Jason*. To make nouns and pronouns more interesting, writers use descriptive words called **adjectives** to describe them. For example:

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

- Which sentence is better? Why?

Did you know that there are several different types of adjectives? The following sentences show examples of the different types:

My grandma's spare room is my most favorite place to sleep. A downy soft pillow, sheets made from

Egyptian cotton, and the sweet-smelling breeze that drifts through the open window lull me to sleep in an instant, and I always wake up to delectable smells wafting up the stairs from the kitchen.

Just as nouns have both common and proper designations, adjectives may be proper as well. Can you find proper adjective in our example? The word *Egyptian* is a **proper adjective** that describes the noun *cotton*. Conversely, *spare* is a **common adjective** that describes *room*. *sweet-smelling* is a **compound adjective**—two words joined together that act as an adjective. Even the words *a*, *an* and *the*, which are called **articles**, act as adjectives in the structure of a sentence.

- Look at the dictation passage. What adjectives do you see? Remember, adjectives are words that describe nouns. If you see a word that describes a verb (an action), it is an **adverb**, which we'll discuss later. Record the adjectives you find in the chart below:

Common Adjectives

Proper Adjectives

Compound Adjectives

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1. Meindert DeJong, *House of Sixty Fathers*, (HarperTrophy: New York, 1987), 10.



Language Arts F: Week 3 Activity Sheet

Use tally marks to record the articles you find:

the	a	an

Tone

Have you ever heard someone say, "Don't speak to me in that tone of voice?" What does tone of voice mean? In literature, **tone is the attitude that a writer has for a written passage.** As a writer, the words you use create the tone.

The best time to set the tone is when you are describing the setting or events in a story. For example, this week you will write about a scary moment you experienced in your life. You want to relate to your readers the feelings as you experienced them, so you will choose words that express how frightened you were.

Tone in Literature

Read the passages below with Mom or Dad and discuss the feelings that you get as you read them. Underline the specific words that contribute most significantly to the overall tone. Write a word to describe the tone at the beginning of the paragraph. Then, write a new sentence that matches the tone of the rest of the paragraph.

- _____ "Buck had accepted the rope with quiet dignity. To be sure, it was an unwonted performance, but he had learned to trust in men he knew, and to give them credit for a wisdom that outreached his own. But when the ends of the rope were placed in the stranger's hands, he growled menacingly. He had merely intimated his displeasure, in his pride believing that to intimate was to command. But to his surprise the rope tightened around his neck, shutting off his breath. In quick rage he sprang at the man, who met him halfway, grappled him close by the throat, and with a deft twist threw him over on his back. Then the rope tightened mercilessly, while Buck struggled in a fury, his tongue

lolling out of his mouth and his great chest panting futilely. Never in all his life had he been so vilely treated, and never in all his life had he been so angry. But his strength ebbed, his eyes glazed, and he knew nothing when the train was flagged and the two men threw him into the baggage car."

Adapted from *Call of the Wild*
by Jack London

- _____ "At first, when he found himself in the grip of what he was sure must be the Robber Fly, Buster Bumblebee was so alarmed that he could not even scream. But in a moment or two he found his voice. And he shrieked 'Help! Help!' in a most frantic tone, hoping that some one would come and save him."

Adapted from *The Tale of Buster Bumblebee*
by Arthur Scott Bailey



3. _____ “That was a narrow escape!’ said Alice, a good deal frightened at the sudden change, but very glad to find herself still in existence; `and now for the garden!’ She ran with all speed back to the little door, but the little door was shut again, and the little golden key was lying on the glass table as before, `and things are worse than ever,’ thought the poor child, `for I never was so small as this before, never! And I declare it’s too bad, that it is!”

Adapted from *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

4. _____ “She threw herself back on her pillow and buried her face. She did not cry, but she lay and hated the sound of the heavily beating rain, she hated the wind and its ‘wuthering.’ She could not go to sleep again. The mournful sound kept her awake because she felt mournful herself. If she had felt happy it would probably have lulled her to sleep. How it ‘wuthered’ and how the big raindrops poured down and beat against the pane!”

Adapted from *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

5. _____ “Bunny! Bunny! Wake up! It’s time!”

‘Wha--what’s matter?’ sleepily mumbled little Bunny Brown, making his words all run together, like molasses candy that has been out in the hot sun. ‘What’s the matter, Sue?’ Bunny asked, now that he had his eyes open. He looked over the side of his small bed to see his sister standing beside it. She had left her own little room and had run into her brother’s.

‘What’s the matter, Sue?’ Bunny asked again.

‘Why, it’s time to get up, Bunny,’ and Sue opened her brown eyes more widely, as she tried to get the ‘sleepy feeling’ out of them. ‘It’s time to get up!’”

Adapted from *Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue* by Laura Lee Hope

Create Tone

Write three paragraphs in your sketchbook to create a tone for your choice of three of the following tone words:

1. happy
2. sad
3. annoyed
4. nervous
5. frightened

Choose words for your paragraphs with connotations that transfer or relay the specific tone. In the example below, notice that the words “slammed,” “stomped,” and “ruined” communicate the anger that Sally feels. Only one rule: you cannot use the tone word in your paragraph. For example, if the tone word is anger, you cannot write the word anger. Instead show the reader the anger with examples and details:

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Language Arts F: Week 3 Activity Sheet

Incorrect: Sally was angry because her sister made her mad.

Correct: Sally slammed the door to her bedroom and stomped across the room. Her sister had borrowed her clothes again without her permission. To make matters worse, her sister ruined the shirt when she spilled spaghetti sauce on it. Her sister wasn't even in trouble. Sally was grounded because she yelled at her sister. It wasn't fair.

Have someone read your paragraphs and identify your tone. They do not have to state the exact tone; as long as they get the sense, you'll have succeeded. If your tone is joyful and your reader says that the tone is happiness, then you have still portrayed the tone in your writing.

How well did you do? How many tones did your reader recognize correctly? Add your tone paragraphs to your sketch book as ideas for future compositions.

Tone in a Scary Story

Today, write a story about a time when you were scared.

Set the story in a scary tone that illustrates how you felt at the time. If you can't think of a time when you were scared, write about a scary time one of your friends or family members has experienced. Focus on your word choice; use examples and details to show the tone.

Section Three

Reading Assignments and Notes

Readers

Teaching Vocabulary and Cultural Literacy

Vocabulary

Read each quote aloud and challenge your students to use the context presented to tell you the meaning of the word in **bold italics**.

Cultural Literacy

Use the list of definitions below like a glossary to help your students understand these terms as you read.

Day
1

pp. 11–33

Setting

Lao Shan, China

Overview

Although his family and his village are all fishermen, Li Lun hates the sea. Angry, his father sends him to the top of the mountain to grow seven grains of rice. He cannot return home until he grows seven times that number. By himself for four months, Li Lun conquers the mountain, his fears, the gulls and rats, mildew and hunger, the rain and the drought, and returns to his village with ninety-nine grains. The Keeper of the Temple realizes that Li Lun is not a coward but brave, and that to grow a grain of rice is as great a work as the creation of a mountain, and Li Lun goes to the Temple to grow rice and teach others to do the same.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: At what age do boys in Li Lun’s village go on their first fishing voyage?

A: 10

Q: What does Li Lun fear about the sea?

A: *that evil spirits would pull him under the water*

Q: How do the villagers get salt?

A: *the children carry sea water to holes in the mountain’s rocks; the water evaporates and leaves the salt*

Q: What is the purpose of the painted eye on the side of the sampan?

A: *to show the fishing boat the way to travel in deep waters*

Q: How did Li Lun show respect to Sun Ling?

A: *he bowed to him, waited for him to speak, spoke respectfully to him*

The hour of short shadows would be noon.

Q: Why does Li Lun prefer the land over the sea?

A: *the rocks are at peace with each other and the waves are not*

Day
2

pp. 34–53

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Retell the story of Lao Shan.

A: *the mountain was once Mei Shan [Beautiful Mountain], but grew proud of its beauty and height; the wind and the sea decided to put the proud mountain under the sea where all vain things belong, so they lashed the mountain and destroyed everything on it; the mountain remained, renamed as Lao Shan [Sorrow Mountain]*

Q: How does Li Lun plant the rice grains?

A: *he finds sticks and reeds for the bottom of the rock hole he chooses, which must not be too shallow or too exposed and must have sunshine; then he mixes the soil with bird droppings and puts this over the reeds; he puts each grain in the ground and marks the spot with a gull feather, covers the soil with his jacket to ward off gulls, and waters the rice with his gourd*

Q: What does Li Lun make during the rain?

A: *he builds a rock bench, then makes a girl-who-sweeps-clear-the-weather doll*

Day
3

pp. 54–77

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why are the rats brave enough to come into the open to gnaw the stems?

A: *Li Lun covered the stalks with a mat and so the sun doesn’t frighten the rodents away*

Q: What does Li Lun do for the final stalk?

A: *he watches it all day and checks on it by night; when harvest comes, he takes the whole stalk*

Day
4

pp. 78–96

To Discuss After You Read

Q: What does Li Lun say to the boys that tease him as a coward?

A: *I am not a coward. I have done what I was sent to do*

Q: How many grains of rice did Li Lun collect?

A: 99

Q: The Good One tells Li Lun “the production of a grain of rice is as great a work as the creation of a mountain.” Do you agree with this proverb?

Q: What happens to each of the seven grains with which Li Lun began?

A: *two are killed by gulls; three [probably four] are gnawed by rats; the remaining one produces ninety-nine grains of rice*

Q: How does the story end for Li Lun?

A: *he will grow rice on the temple grounds and teach others to do the same; his mother is very proud of him, and his father is still angry and distant, but is proud, too, a bit*

Q: Read Matthew 13:1–9. How is Li Lun’s story like this parable? How does it differ? ■

Note: Please take note that there are multiple reading assignments for this title everyday, and that they aren't sequential. We have outlined all of the notes for each story below.

Day
5

"The Unanswerable," pp. 63-65

Cultural Literacy

Armorer: a maker of weapons or armor.

Latest castings: to make using liquid metal poured into a mold to harden.

Ferrule: a metal band used to strengthen a seam or joint.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: What does the title mean?

A: *when the armorer claimed that two different weapons could not be overcome, then he is lying, as one weapon must ultimately be stronger than the other*

Day
5

"The Clever Wife," pp. 14-17

Cultural Literacy

Acumen: able to make quick decisions with good judgment.

Magistrate: one who administers the law in a court.

Prodigious talents: remarkable, great, enormous, massive.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How did the "matchless wife" solve the sticky problem?

A: *she asked for precise measurement to fulfill the impossible tasks*

Day
5

"From Bad to Good to Bad to Good," pp. 39-41

Cultural Literacy

Northern steppes: a large area of flat unforested grassland in southeastern Europe or Siberia.

To the land of the barbarians: the Mongols of Mongolia.

...he was inconsolable.: could not be comforted.

Mongolian stallion: a smaller sized horse, but strong.

Gloomy foreboding: fearful apprehension.

Belying the grief: to disprove, discredit, negate.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Can you think of a situation that goes from bad to good or vice versa?

A: *sample: a job that one loses only to gain a much better one; to lose a friend only to gain a better one; a good story that ends with nothing new to read*

Day
5

"The Betrothal," pp. 80-85

Cultural Literacy

...scud of dust: dust blown in a straight line by the wind.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: what was the result of the maiden's foolish promise?

A: *her father killed and skinned his beloved horse, and his daughter turned into a silkworm*

Q: What could be the moral of this story?

A: *don't let loneliness cause you to behave foolishly; don't let pride (in the case of the father) rob you of your family; don't look to princes to save you*

Day
5

"Golden Life," pp. 89-91

Cultural Literacy

Water clock: the oldest time measuring system.

Astrolabe: an ancient astronomical computer (a dial with an outer ring) used to solve problems relating to time and the position of the Sun and stars in the sky.

Taoist: one who follows the Tao or a code of behavior that trusts in the yin and yang (or balance of opposites) and tries to live in harmony with the natural order.

Alchemy: forerunner of chemistry where people attempted to change metals: mostly base metals into gold.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Is the Taoist's story suspicious?

A: *yes, since so many people want immortality, why only make one pill?*

Q: Is immortality to be desired?

A: *no, the Emperor (with everything) got bored while waiting for someone to bring him the pill*

Day
5

"Logic," pp. 21-22

Cultural Literacy

Ch'ang An: then the capital for more than ten dynasties: nowadays called Xian; the Terra-cotta warriors were discovered there. The modern capital of China is Beijing.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: What do you think of the boy's logic?

A: *he is clever, reasonable, and makes judgments without maps (he lacks both maps of the sky and earth); if we didn't have such information, we wouldn't be able to tell distances either*

Cultural Literacy

...these depredations...: to attack or plunder.

...to the bereft family to allay their grief.: to deprive or rob of a non-material asset (like a person); allay: to reduce, ease, soften: to reluctantly accept without protest.

...there emanated a stench so foul...: exude, emit, radiate.

...when a lengthy sough of breathing...: a moaning, whistling, or rushing sound as made by the wind in the trees or the sea.

So ambrosial a scent...: delicious, fragrant, worthy of the gods.

...the worm's insatiable appetite...: impossible to satisfy.

Chi pretended to acquiesce...: to reluctantly accept without protest.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: The sorceress asks, "Such a wise and clever magistrate can see at once that one maiden is a small price to pay to spare an entire district of people." Is the loss of only one person such a small price to pay? Is one small maiden's life of small value?
- A: *sample: people often justify murder by comparing a cost of the few to the benefit of the many; this goes against Christ's teachings that each person is made in the image of God; this also demonstrates the idea in Chinese culture that girls are of less value than boys: girls require an outlay of cash in the form of a dowry, whereas boys supposedly will care for parents into the culture; only in Christianity are women counted as valuable as men*
- Q: How did Li Chi conquer the serpent?
- A: *she used a distraction, coupled with pain and blindness, aided with a sharp sword; she came with a plan*
- Q: What does Chi mean when she says, "...who had allowed themselves to be sacrificed because they knew nothing of rebellion against injustice..." Do you agree with her thinking?
- A: *the girls before her had not fought against the injustice of their murder but had allowed themselves to be killed; I believe the girls were unjustly killed, but maybe they were not as clever to come up with a plan (and they had no one to stand up for them)*

Cultural Literacy

...grew morose: gloomy, sullen, unhappy, glum.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did the farmer decide that he was dealing with a fairy creature?
- A: *his helper came into his home through locked doors, and when he saw a young woman, she vanished without a shadow*
- Q: Why was it hard for the farmer to keep his promise?
- A: *too much alcohol loosened his tongue*

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Do you think Clod's wife gave him a good description of a comb?

Cultural Literacy

O my Venerable Sir...: to be granted honor and respect due to age, wisdom or character.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: "He belonged to a brotherhood that believed peace and happiness would come to the world if everyone would practice self-denial for the good of his fellow man." Do you think it is possible to mandate self-denial for all people? Do you think peace and happiness would follow? Why or why not?
- A: *while self denial might produce a lower desire for things, due to our sinful nature, when we are denied something, we end up wanting it more; only the Christian worldview fits with the reality we find in the world*
- Q: How did the wise man convince Tung Kuo to go against his beliefs to kill the wolf?
- A: *"You would remove one humane soul from the world and leave in its place a devil-hearted fiend that preys on humanity." Tung Kuo's worldview that encouraged self-denial did not fit the reality he needed to stay alive.*

Day
7

"The Pointing Finger," pp. 60-62

Cultural Literacy

Eight Immortals: mythological characters; part of the Tao religion, well-known characters in Chinese culture; used to symbolize happiness; they represent all kinds of people: old, young, male, female, civil, military, rich poor, afflicted, cultured, noble.

P'eng-Lai Mountain: a mountain on one of the five islands the immortals live on in the Bohai Sea.

His test for avarice was simple.: extreme greed for material wealth.

...whose cupidity did not outweigh his gratitude.: greed for money or possessions.

...his head canted to one side.: to tilt, to lean, to slant.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why did not of the people pass the Immortal's test?

A: *they all wanted more than what was offered and were not happy with the gift given*

Day
7

"The Monk and the Drunk," pp. 106-107

The shaved head shows that the main character is a Buddhist monk.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: One Buddhist belief is that desire and attachment are causes of unhappiness and sufferings. Is a monk "whose indication, when he came up against the law, was to break it," a good representative of his faith?

Day
7

"Stewed, Roasted, or Live?" pp. 98-99

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Would it have mattered how each man cooked his dinner? Can we get irritated about unimportant things?

Day
7

"A Rare Bargain," p. 13

Cultural Literacy

Catty: a small storage container.

To call vinegar sweet, new wine is false advertising. There are traces of alcohol in vinegar but in a very small amount. Wine vinegars such as red, white, or balsamic vinegar do start with a diluted wine which is then fermented.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Who is the "stupid one?"

A: *the one who willingly drinks vinegar rather than asking for the less expensive wine.*

Notice that the prices were written on scrolls rather than paper or a blackboard.

Day
7

"The Wine Bibber," pp. 42-44

Cultural Literacy

Connoisseur: an expert judge in matters of taste.

Best vintages: high quality wine.

...to find an ignoramus: an ignorant person.

...attacking a succulent tree: tender, juicy, tasty.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Do you think the owner believed the servant's story?

A: *possibly; the servant had seemed to believe the owner's story about poison, and it wasn't an unreasonable story*

Day
8

"Old Fuddlement," pp. 45-48

Cultural Literacy

Into a cangue: a device used for public humiliation and corporal punishment in China; a large, flat spare fastened around the neck to frame the face and prevent freedom of movement.

...to pay indemnity: money paid in compensation, a form of insurance or protection against loss.

Fear of spavins: a disorder of the horse's hock.

Horse's hocks: the joint in the hind leg of a horse above the fetlock joint; it is similar to the ankle in people.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Can you come up with a similar insult to the villagers, "Useless as a black leather lamp"?

A: *answers will vary*

Q: Did he magistrate recognize that he was the problem the people were complaining about?

A: *no, he assumed the people wanted their confused neighbors locked away*

Day
8

"Thievery," pp. 78-79

Cultural Literacy

String of cash: Chinese coins are round with a square hole cut in the middle; to carry them, Chinese tie them onto a string.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Can you think of a situation like this where the wrongdoer can complain?

A: *if during an armed robbery, a thief himself is injured; if a student cheats on a test and the stolen answers were wrong, etc.*

Day
8

"Ten Jugs of Wine," pp. 18-20

Cultural Literacy

New Year: the most important Chinese holiday; a time to honor the gods, and spend time with family.

Detriment: to be harmed or damaged.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why did each graybeard bring a jug of water to the gathering? What does it show about their character?

A: *each thought the other would bring wine and they wanted to save money; they were greedy*

Day
8

"The Living Kuan-yin," pp. 23-29

Cultural Literacy

Chekiang Province: an eastern province.

Inadvertently, during the exchange of stories....: accidentally, without intent

...Po-wan examined the quandary in which he found himself.: a difficult situation, a practical dilemma

Chin Po-wan: the story opens with the statement that the family name Chin means gold; in Chinese communication, the last name is written first (which is just the opposite of the West).

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Was Po-wan wise? Should he have given away all his wealth?

A: *no; he could have set up businesses to continue to help the poor; to always subtract cash with no input leads to no cash (as we see in the story)*

Q: Why is this story part of China's oral tradition?

A: *to encourage people to be charitable; the story shows that if you give away all your money, you will get it all back*

Q: Why is the story called the Living Kuan-yin?

A: *she is considered the all-merciful goddess; Po-wan was a picture of her*

Po-wan thinks, "Furthermore, assisting others must certainly be counted as a good deed, and the more good deeds abroad in the land, the better for everyone, including me." His thoughts come from his Buddhist mindset of karma; ultimately he doesn't do good deeds because they are right, but because it buys him favor in his future.

Day
8

"The Thief Who Kept his Hands Clean," pp. 30-32

Cultural Literacy

The giant bell came from the Temple of the Great Buddha: "In Buddhism bells have many important meanings. They are often used as a call to prayer as they can be heard even at great distances. The ring of the bell can represent the heavenly enlightened voice of the Buddha teaching the dharma and can also be used as a call for protection and as a way to ward off evil spirits." (Wikipedia).

Fire pots: used to heat home: think how clean the air would be inside the home where one is used.

Divination: to seek knowledge or foretell the future through supernatural means.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why is the title of the story ironic?

A: *we often consider a thief as someone with "dirty hands;" crime produces unclean or unjust behavior; here the thief was the only one with clean hands*

Day
9

"One Hairball," pp. 73-77

Cultural Literacy

Tibet: was conquered by the communist army of China in 1950. The People's Republic of China claims that Tibet is an integral part of China. The Tibetan government-in-exile maintains that Tibet is an independent state under unlawful occupation.

Grandiloquently: pompous, flowery, pretentious.

...didn't deign to look around: to do something below one's dignity.

Groats: hulled kernels of oats, buckwheat, or barley.

...at it disparagingly: to belittle.

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How did the frog overcome the tiger?

A: *he claimed to be royal, and that he had great strength, had eaten another tiger, and that he was in cahoots with the fox; he used mind games*

Cultural Literacy

Szechuan Province: southwestern Chinese province; it holds a portion of the Yangtze River.

...in lugubrious lines: smooth and slippery.

...the lotus pond: a type of water lily.

Millet stalks: a grain used to make flour.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: After reading this story, can you imagine why God would recommend only one wife for one husband?
 A: *yes; the jealousy of the two wives lead to intense brokenness in the family*

Cultural Literacy

...the blind mendicant: a beggar.

...with alacrity: cheerful readiness.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: While Noodle only wanted to learn "wisdom and not bargains," re-look at the additional proverbs various people tried to teach him. Restate the premise of all of them in your own words.
 A: *a fool and his money are soon parted.*
 Q: Why do the Chinese tell this story?
 A: *to encourage themselves that even foolish children may turn out well; to show how a few good proverbs can have great effect; a proud father can gain a foolish son-in-law; to not take themselves too seriously*

Cultural Literacy

Open air coffins: a burial box that is sealed but not buried.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did the family celebrate the only holiday they could afford: New Year?
 A: *they all gathered and ate together*
 Q: What did the celebration of New Year require of all Chinese?
 A: *to pay off their debts: to not enter the new Year with debt as that was "asking for more misfortune"*
 Q: How does Ah-Kou justify taking the dead man's cash?
 A: *the man had promised Ah-Kou a "fine large sum: and Ah-Kou thought all the cash the dead man carried equaled a large sum; plus, when Ah-Kou chooses to bury the head man, Ah-Kou believes himself rewarded for doing good deeds by taking the gold, silver and jewels from the casket; ultimately, he is glad to take the money from the robbers who would have kept the money from their dead friend* ■

Day
10

Chapters 1–6

Cultural Literacy

Lychee: a sweet fruit. [chap. 2]

To Discuss After You Read

If you are interested, check the web to find the Chinese zodiac animals for your family members. [chap. 1]

- Q: Why was the Year of the Dog significant in Chinese culture? [chap. 1]
 A: *it was a year to find best friends coupled with good family ties, and a good year to find yourself: “your values and what you want to do.”*
- Q: Why did the family set out a tray of candy on New Year’s Day? [chap. 1]
 A: *“If it is full of sweet things, it means your year will be full of sweet things.”*
- Q: What did all the food served on Chinese New Year symbolize? [chap. 2]
 A: *wealth; to encourage riches to come to the family*
- Q: How did Grandpa become a successful doctor? [chap. 2]
 A: *“Like the smell of roast pork, the news of Grandpa’s good work spread around the village.”*
- Q: How does Lissy recommend Pacy choose a career? What do you think of her advice? [chap. 3]
 A: *she should find something that could make her rich and that she has a talent in*
- Q: How did the training in Pacy’s mother’s school in Taiwan differ from training in the United States? [chap. 4]
 A: *she had to learn to be a good citizen: to “follow all the rules and work hard,” to not question authority, and to always do what she was told.*
- Q: Why was Pacy’s heritage confusing? [chap. 5]
 A: *while she considered herself an American, she had Taiwanese roots which are closely linked to Chinese roots*

“Taiwan is an island which has for all practical purposes been independent since 1950, but which China regards as a rebel region that must be reunited with the mainland - by force if necessary.

China has claimed sovereignty over Taiwan since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, when the defeated Nationalist government fled to the island as the Communists, under Mao Zedong, swept to power.

China insists that nations cannot have official relations with both China and Taiwan, with the result that Taiwan has formal diplomatic ties with only a few countries. The US is Taiwan’s most important friend and protector.

Despite its diplomatic isolation, Taiwan has become one of Asia’s big traders. It is considered to have achieved an economic miracle, becoming one of the world’s top producers of computer technology.”¹ [chap. 5]

- Q: Do you think the lady who served lunch to the students was confused by every new blond-haired child? Why was she confused after serving two Chinese-heritage children? [chap. 5]
 A: *she was unable to see the children as unique*
- Q: What occurs that shows Grace that Melody is going to be a good friend? [chap. 6]
 A: *Melody backed up Grace’s story about the day of the unicorn; she could see that Pacy was embarrassed and didn’t want Pacy to feel worse*

Day
11

Chapters 7-12

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why does Grace have two names? [chap. 7]
 A: *she has a Chinese and an American name; a nod to both cultures*
- Q: How did Grace deal with the food she didn’t enjoy? [chap. 8]
 A: *she didn’t eat it, she worried that she was too full of nutrients, and decided she wouldn’t eat at her friend’s house again*
- Q: What did a Red Egg party celebrate? [chap. 9]
 A: *a new birth: designed to bring good luck*
- Q: Why did Grace’s relatives ask her if she had eaten yet? [chap. 10]
 A: *to be polite, as a form of greeting, out of concern: since food is big part of the culture, and it meant “How are you doing?”*
- Q: Why do you think Grandma’s cure worked? [chap. 11]
 A: *mom predicted the stiffness would go away as Pacy woke up; maybe the painting on her neck distracted her?*
- Q: Why was it a good thing that Teddy did not become Pacy’s boyfriend? [chap. 12]
 A: *she’s too young for a boyfriend, and a boyfriend would have disturbed her friendship with Melody*

Day
12

Chapters 13-18

Cultural Literacy

NASA: the National Aeronautics and Space Administration: America’s space agency, pioneering space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research. [chap. 15]

Bound feet: to wrap the feet tightly in an excruciating way, the toes would be broken to tuck under the feet to keep the feet small; it changed the shape of the feet and made it hard to walk or work. [chap. 18]

¹ “Taiwan Country Profile.” BBC News. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16164639>. Accessed March 12, 2018.

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did Grace's mother learn to play the piano? Do you think it was easy? [chap. 13]
- A: *she practiced on her piano teacher's piano, and on a paper piano while her mother sang each note*
- Q: Describe Pacy and Melody's experiment. [chap. 14]
- A: *they gave four pea plants four different fluids: milk, orange juice, ginger ale, and water; the one with soda grew the best*
- Pacy thinks, "I could be like Albert Einstein, but I would comb my hair." Einstein is well-known for his wild, bushy hair. [chap. 14]
- Q: Why didn't Pacy win the contest? [chap. 15]
- A: *her experiment was flawed: she didn't give the plants equal amounts of liquid nor sunshine, and she should have used more plants in her test*
- Q: Why does Pacy think Chinese people aren't important? What do you think of her reasoning? [chap. 16]
- A: *she doesn't see Chinese role models in movies, books or plays; she has a point: it is good to be aware of other cultures*
- Q: Why did Grace have a tough time coming up with a story? [chap. 17]
- A: *she thought she had a boring life, and she had writer's block*
- Q: Why did all the grandmothers stay at school all day? [chap. 18]
- A: *because it hurt to walk, they chose to only take the single trip, plus they got to stay together and talk*

Day
13

Chapters 19-23

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did Grace worry about her part in the play? [chap. 19]
- A: *she worried that the audience would be offended by a Chinese munchkin*
- Q: How does Grace come up with an idea for her story? [chap. 20]
- A: *as she helps her mother in the garden, she decides to write about the ugly vegetables her mother grows*
- Q: Did Grace think her final project was worth the effort? [chap. 21]
- A: *yes, she both got a good grade, and the satisfaction of a job well-done*
- Q: Why did Melody's aunt serve food to empty chairs? What do you think of this idea? [chap. 22]
- A: *she sought to honor her dead parents by giving their ghosts food first; I don't believe in ghosts, and think it is wiser to honor our parents while we are alive*
- Q: What good advice does Mother give when the girls at camp call Grace a "Twinkie?" [chap. 23]
- A: *"You don't have to be more one than the other, you're Chinese-American; embrace both your wonderful heritages*

Day
14

Chapters 24-29

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How would you punish Uncle Shin for being so greedy? [chap. 24]
- A: *maybe keep him from any treats for a year*
- Q: Why do you think Pacy didn't win the Halloween contest? [chap. 25]
- A: *it wasn't because her legs were blue, but her costume wasn't as original as Melody's*
- Q: What did Pacy decide near the end of the Year of the Dog? [chap. 26]
- A: *that she would become a writer/illustrator*
- Q: Why did Pacy's mom have a hard time celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas? [chap. 27]
- A: *she mixed the boring turkey with delicious Chinese food, and she would rather give money in a red envelope than buy a gift (much more practical!)*
- Q: How did the family celebrate Chinese New Year? [chap. 28]
- A: *they would clean the house, hang Chinese decorations, buy new clothes, and get their hair cut*
- Q: What did Pacy think about the Year of the Dog? [chap. 29]
- A: *she liked it: she met her new best friend, won a prize, discovered her talent, and got rich ■*

Language Arts F—Scope and Sequence: Schedule for Topics and Skills

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
1	nouns: gender, concrete/abstract, compound, collective; personification	The Purpose of Writing (Self-Interview/Sketchbook) Observation Essay (Descriptive)
2	hyphens; dashes	The Definition Essay (Expository Writing) Revise (Writing Process)
3	adjectives: articles, proper and common, compound	Tone (Literary Techniques) Create Tone (Word Choice) Tone in a Scary Story (Application/Creative Writing)
4	verbs: action verbs, helping verbs, singular and plural verbs	Character Sketch Warm-up (Writing Process) Character Sketch First Draft (Descriptive) Revise (Writing Process)
5	types of adverbs	Character Development (Character Analysis) Develop a Character (Creative Expression) Write from the Character’s Perspective (Imaginative)
6	pronouns: and antecedents, personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, subject pronouns	Active and Passive Sentences (Sentence Fluency) Plan Out the Friendly Letter (Writing Process) Write the Friendly Letter (Organization)
7	punctuation: commas as noun of direct address; interjections; to separate adjectives; to set off interruptions; appositive	Explore a News Article (Comprehension) The Straight News Article (Imaginative) Write the Straight News Article (Expository)
8	person of pronouns: first-, second-, third-	Combine Sentences (Sentence Fluency) Outline for a Feature Article (Research & Outline) Write a Feature Article (Expository)
9	pronouns: intensive, reflexive, indefinite	Fact or Opinion (Analysis) Prepare for the Letter to the Editor (Persuasive) Write the Letter to the Editor (Organization)
10	colons; semicolons	The Purpose of Dialogue (Analysis) Dialogue Organization (Organization) Write Your Own Dialogue (Imaginative)
11	types of pronouns: relative, interrogative, demonstrative	Elements of a Great Story (Analysis) Research Your Animal and Take Notes (Research) Plan Out the Animal Adventure (Imaginative)
12	complete sentences: subjects & predicates—simple, compound, complete	Literary Elements—Personification and Sensory Impressions (Literary Techniques) Write the Animal Adventure (Imaginative) Finish the Animal Adventure Book (Organization/Artistic)
13	writing numbers	Transitions (Sentence Fluency) Prepare to Write the Expository Essay (Expository) Write the Expository Essay (Expository)
14	clauses: conjunctions, independent clauses, coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions	Combine Sentences with a Key Word (Sentence Fluency) Prepare for the Personal Narrative (Writing Process) Write the Personal Narrative (Narrative)
15	quotation marks	Mind Mapping (Writing Process) Write the Bible verse Response (Personal Response) Revise the Bible Verse Response (Writing Process)
16	phrases: noun phrases, adverb phrases, verb phrases, appositive phrases	Cause and Effect (Analysis) Comic Strip (Creative & Imaginative)

(continued on the following page)

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
17	dependent clauses; subordinating conjunctions; relative pronouns; complex sentences	Cause and Effect in Science (Writing Process) Write the Cause and Effect Essay (Critical Thinking) Revise the Cause and Effect Essay (Writing Process)
18	verb forms: transitive verbs—direct objects, indirect objects; intransitive verbs	The Summary (Summarization) The Book Review (Opinion) Revise the Book Review (Writing Process)
19	types of adjectives: demonstrative, indefinite; demonstrative pronouns vs. demonstrative adjectives	Start with a Thesis Statement (Summarization) Begin Your Research (Research) Source Cards (Research)
20	sentence structure; simple, compound, and complete sentences	Note Cards—Quotations (Research) Note Cards—Paraphrase (Research) More Note Cards & Works Cited (Research)
21	plural nouns	The Research Paper Outline (Organization) Refine Thesis and Begin Body Paragraphs (Expository) Complete the Body Paragraphs (Expository)
22	linking verbs: predicate adjectives, predicate nouns; how to write titles	The Introduction and the Conclusion (Expository) Revision (Writing Process) The Final Draft (Writing Process)
23	verb tenses: simple, perfect, past, present, future	Persuasive Writing (Analysis) Write a Persuasive Paragraph (Persuasion) Make It Better (Writing Process)
24	ellipses; parentheses	Organize for a Speech (Oral Presentation) Speech Preparation (Oral Presentation) Speech Delivery (Oral Presentation)
25	prepositional phrases: prepositions, object of the preposition	Personification in Poetry (Literary Techniques) Draft a Personification Poem (Imaginative/Application) Finalize the Personification Poem (Writing Process)
26	noun/pronoun agreement	Foreshadowing (Literary Techniques/Critical Thinking) Reflect on Your Predictions (Reflection)
27	adjective and adverb forms: positive, comparative, superlative	Irony (Literary Techniques) Choose a Poem to Parody (Literary Techniques/Writing Process) Write a Parody (Imaginative)
28	use the right word; apostrophes	Storytelling (Research for an Oral Presentation) Study the Story (Oral Presentation) Present the Story (Oral Presentation)
29	improve your spelling	A Story with a Twist (Brainstorm) Write the Short Story (Imaginative) Revise the Short Story (Writing Process)
30	capitalization	Modeling Sentences (Sentence Fluency) Combine Sentences to Create Paragraphs (Sentence Fluency) Improve Fluency (Writing Process)
31	improving sentences	Information for the Travel Brochure (Research) Write the Tourist Attraction Advertisement (Expository/Persuasion) Revise the Travel Brochure (Writing Process)
32	active and passive voice	Research a Travel Proposal (Research) Prepare for the Proposal Summary (Summarization) Write the Proposal Summary (Summarization)

(continued on the following page)

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
33	subject/verb agreement	Symbolism (Literary Elements/Analysis) Draft the Pre-Reader Picture Story (Imaginative) Finalize the Pre-Reader Picture Story (Writing Process)
34	similes and metaphors	Theme (Literary Elements/Analysis) Write About Theme (Synthesis) Compare Similar Themes (Comparison)
35	types of sentences: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory	Brainstorm for the Movie Poster (Imaginative) Draft the Movie Plot (Imaginative) Compose the Movie Trailer Script (Summarization/Persuasion)
36	abbreviations, acronyms, initialism	Extended Scene (Imaginative) Plan the Sequel (Imaginative) Write a Sequel (Writing Process)

Appendix 2: Recommendations for Teaching Writing

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.

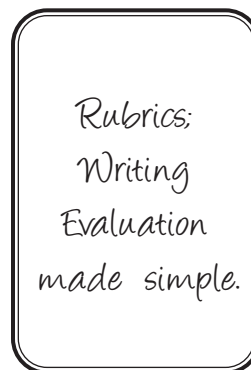
When you create a rubric, first draft a list of all the things you hope the assignment will accomplish, or you hope your child will learn or practice as they complete the assignment. Sometimes it's helpful to list skills by category, so you're sure you've thought of everything you want to evaluate.

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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