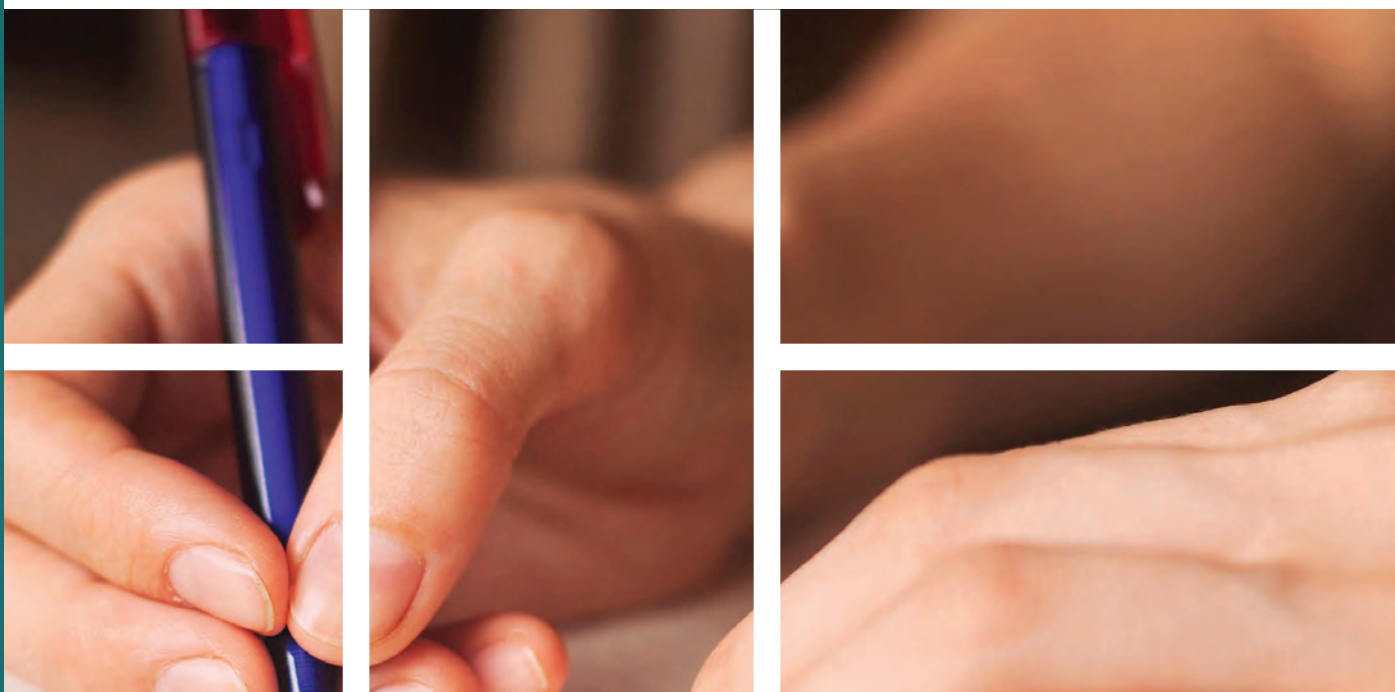
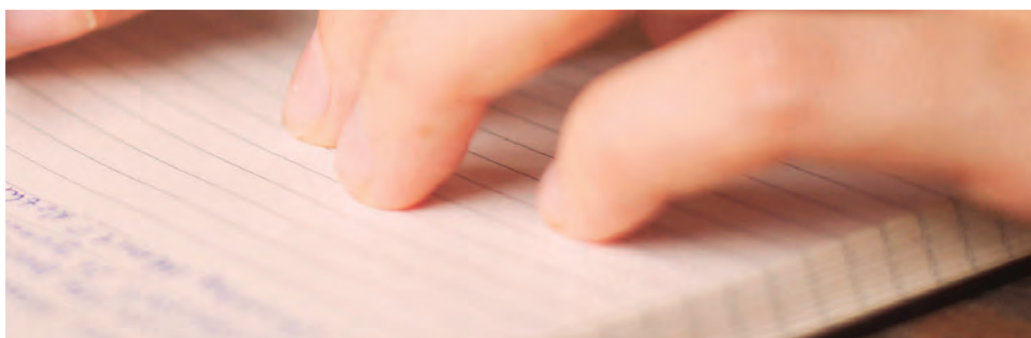


G LANGUAGE ARTS

LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Spelling
Dictation
Vocabulary
Writing Mechanics
Creative Expression
Literary Analysis
Editing





Thank you for downloading this sample of Sonlight's Language Arts G 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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Language Arts (5-Day)

Language Arts G

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)

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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 G” (5-Day) Instructor’s Guide and Notes. If you purchased it from a source other than Sonlight Curriculum, Ltd., you should know that it may not be the latest edition available.

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

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

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

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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?

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: www.sonlight.com/educational-philosophy.

Additional Resources

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

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

Join the Family

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

About this Instructor's Guide

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

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

This guide consists of several parts.

Section One provides a brief overview of your 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

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.

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 each week’s 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.

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 Notes 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 to 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! ■

Language Arts G

Days 1–5: 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	Day 5
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i>					
HAND-WRITING						
GRAMMAR						
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	Optional: <i>Wordly Wise 3000</i> ¹ (for books 4–12)	Lesson 1A		Lesson 1B	Lesson 1C	
READERS	<i>Mara, Daughter of the Nile</i>	chaps. 1–2	chaps. 3–4	chap. 5	chaps. 6–7	chaps. 8–9
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation—Read; Mechanics Practice	Write Your Descriptive Paragraph—Plan	Write Your Descriptive Paragraph	Descriptive Paragraph—Pol- ish	Dictation—Write
<i>Other Notes</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 with each reading title.

Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Sentence Basics Nouns: common/proper; gender; concrete/abstract; compound; collective</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Describe the colors of a place</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write a descriptive paragraph</p>

Spelling

Spelling You See

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.

 Parental Notes

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 **Downloads** section of your Sonlight account to help you review those issues with your student.

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.

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Wordly Wise

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

Readers

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 G 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 students 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 Day 1 your students will study a Dictation passage that they will write down as you read it on Day 5. After they review the passage on Day 1, they will learn about a concept for Mechanics Practice. On Days 2–4, they will work on more formalized Creative Expression assignments. These assignments vary widely each week in order to give your students experience in all types of writing—and oral presentation, too.

Preferred Dictation Method

This dictation method involves two steps. First, on Day 1 ask your students 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. This is also their opportunity to ask you to clarify anything they're unsure about. Once your students understand the passage, have them complete the "Mechanics Practice" activity on the Activity Sheet.

On Day 5, your students should take no more than five to ten minutes to prepare independently for the final 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). As you read the passage to them, avoid the temptation to emphasize the different sounds in each word. Your students should write in the cursive style.

Before handing their papers to you, your students should check their work for errors. They should mark and correct any errors they find. Discuss with your students 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

On Day 1 of each week, we offer a brief introduction to one grammatical or mechanical topic. This year your students 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 the 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.

Day
1

Dictation—Read

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

An hour later he was crossing the worn stone wharfs to the *Beetle's* anchorage. Nekonkh hung over the gunwale, his arms propped wide, his shoulders burnished copper in the brilliant sunlight. Every line of him spelled anxiety. Sheftu stepped into the cool shadow of the hull, swung onto the rope ladder

and climbed up through the blue-green dancing reflections into the glare of sun on deck.¹

Mechanics Practice

This year, your students 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, we include a *Grammar Guide* in **Section Four** this guide that succinctly explains topics we discuss in Mechanics Practice. Please keep this appendix handy for reference as you work this year. Use it whenever you need a refresher on a topic.

Today your students will learn about several types of **nouns**. For more information, see the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**.

Answers:

1. Underline all of the nouns in the passage on the Activity Sheet. Double underline proper nouns. (See the following answers.)
2. Label the gender of each noun. Use **F** for feminine, **M** for masculine, **N** for neuter and **I** for indefinite.

N I N N

Last year my family went to Egypt to see the pyramids of Giza. Most pyramids in Egypt were built as tombs for Pharaohs and other dignitaries—some were even built for queens. Our entire trip was fascinating, but I think I learned the most interesting facts about the Great Pyramid, or the Pyramid of Khufu. Our tour guide said that, surprisingly, no hieroglyphics or writing exists on the inside of it. It is also the most accurately aligned structure in existence, and faces true north with only 3/60th of a degree of error. (We also learned that since the North Pole moves slightly over time, the pyramid must have once been perfectly aligned to true north.) The pyramids of Giza are impressive structures that everyone who studies World History should visit.²

1. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 217–218.

2. Facts source: <http://www.timstouse.com/EarthHistory/Egypt/Great->

Note: “on the inside of it”—*It* is a pronoun. It does act as the object of the preposition, in the prepositional phrase *of it*, and as the subject of the sentence that follows, but as it is not a true noun, we have not underlined it for this exercise. We will discuss pronouns, prepositional phrases, and subjects and predicates later on this year.

3. **concrete**—(Possible) *family, Egypt, pyramids, Giza, pyramids, Egypt, tombs, Pharaohs, dignitaries, queens, trip, facts, Great Pyramid, Pyramid of Khufu, guide, hieroglyphics, writing, inside, structure, true north, degree, error, North Pole, pyramid, true north, pyramids, Giza, structures, everyone*; **abstract**—*year, existence, time, World History*; **compound noun**—(Possible) *Great Pyramid, Pyramid of Khufu, tour guide, true north, World History*; **collective noun**—*family*.

Day
1

Optional Dictation

For your convenience, we provide an additional dictation passage each week. If your students 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.

My story will tell much of that little strip of land called Canaan to the south, between us and the accursed land of Egypt, which was only a name to me when I was a child. For all the wealth and all the armies and all the glories of the nations have passed through that little land and probably always will; and the story of the kings of Canaan is the story of the world.³

Day
2

Write Your Descriptive Paragraph—Plan

Today and tomorrow your students will write a colorful descriptive paragraph. Today they will use a table to help plan out the details of their paragraph. See “Write Your Descriptive Paragraph—Plan” on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet** for more information.

Day
3

Write Your Descriptive Paragraph

Today your students will use the ideas they brainstormed yesterday to write a descriptive paragraph. Follow the directions under “Write Your Descriptive Paragraph” on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**.

Day
4

Descriptive Paragraph—Polish

Have your students review and edit their paragraphs. Follow the directions under “Descriptive Paragraph—Polish” on the **Week 1 Activity Sheet**.

How to Evaluate This Week’s Assignment

For this first assignment of the school year, focus on getting back into the process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Did your students take time to write thoughtful and thorough notes about the topic? Did they rely on the notes when drafting their paragraph the first time? Were there notable improvements made from the first draft to the final? Also, consider your students’ ability to work more independently this year. Did they follow directions correctly? Work diligently without prompting? These are habits you will want to help them build early in the year.

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

Rubrics

Have you ever wondered how you should evaluate your students’s writing? 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.

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 students 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 students 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**.

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[Pyramid/interestingfacts.htm](#). Accessed May 2014.

3. Joanne S. Williamson, *Hittite Warrior* (Bathgate, ND: Bethlehem Books, 2001), xvi–xvii.

Descriptive Paragraph Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The student used notes to thoroughly describe the colors of objects
_____	5 pts	The language flows naturally and is used effectively
_____	5 pts	The paragraph clearly describes the appearance of the place
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	The paragraph is organized logically, with a main topic and supporting details
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses correct capitalization and punctuation
_____	÷ 30 pts possible = _____%	
Total pts		

Read the dictation passage aloud and have your students write the passage on a separate piece of paper. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention.

An hour later he was crossing the worn stone wharfs to the *Beetle's* anchorage. Nekonkh hung over the gunwale, his arms propped wide, his shoulders burnished copper in the brilliant sunlight. Every line of him spelled anxiety. Sheftu stepped into the cool shadow of the hull, swung onto the rope ladder and climbed up through the blue-green dancing reflections into the glare of sun on deck.⁴ ■

4. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 217–218.



Dictation—Read

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. At the end of the week, your mom or dad will read the passage and you will write it on a separate piece of paper.

An hour later he was crossing the worn stone wharfs to the *Beetle’s* anchorage. Nekonkh hung over the gunwale, his arms propped wide, his shoulders burnished copper in the brilliant sunlight. Every line of him spelled anxiety. Sheftu stepped into the cool shadow of the hull, swung onto the rope ladder and climbed up through the blue-green dancing reflections into the glare of sun on deck.¹

Mechanics Practice

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing or idea. *Dog, tractor, mailman, bookcase* and *jealousy* are all examples of nouns. A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing or idea, such as *Pittsburgh, Mary,* or *Sonlight,* 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:

	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*).

Read the passage below and then answer the questions that follow.

Last year my family went to Egypt to see the pyramids of Giza. Most pyramids in Egypt were built as tombs for Pharaohs and other dignitaries—some were even built for queens. Our entire trip was fascinating, but I think I learned the most interesting facts about the Great Pyramid, or the Pyramid of Khufu. Our tour guide said that, surprisingly, no hieroglyphics or writing exists on the inside of it. It is also the most accurately aligned structure in existence, and faces true north with only 3/60th of a degree of error. (We also learned that since the North Pole moves slightly over time, the pyramid must have once been perfectly aligned to true north.) The pyramids of Giza are impressive structures that everyone who studies World History should visit.²

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

1. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 217–218.

2. Facts source: <http://www.timstouse.com/EarthHistory/Egypt/Great-Pyramid/interestingfacts.htm>. (Accessed May 2014).

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Language Arts G: Week 1 Activity Sheet

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. If they exist, list one of each of the following types of nouns found in the passage:

concrete: _____

abstract: _____

compound: _____

collective: _____

Write Your Descriptive Paragraph—Plan

Today and tomorrow you will write a colorful descriptive paragraph about your home town or a place you love. For inspiration, read the paragraph from *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* below.

The city that rose beyond them shimmered, almost drained of color, in the glare of Egyptian noon. Doorways were blue-black in white buildings, alleys were plunged in shadow; the gay colors of the sails and hulls that crowded the harbor seemed faded and indistinct, and even the green of the Nile was overlaid by a blinding surface glitter. Only the sky was vivid, curving in a high blue arch over ancient Menfe.³

How many references to color did the author make? Your job specifically for this week’s writing assignment is to describe the colors of a place you love.

A good description develops a main idea for the reader. What is the color palette of your favorite place? Is it bright and cheery? Cool and misty? Are there shades of blue or glittering white? Use specific examples to support the main idea of this color palette.

Close your eyes and pretend you are standing in your favorite place. What time of day is it? How does the light from the sun (if you can see it) impact what you see? Choose four or five objects in the scene to describe the colors of in your paragraph.

Today, summarize your thoughts in the table below before you write the paragraph tomorrow. Focus on the message that you want to give your readers. What is the overall feel of the entire color palette you’d like to describe? Write the topic sentence of your paragraph before you finish today.

My Favorite Place:

Color Palette of My Favorite Place:

(What is the tone of the colors you see there? Are they mostly shades of one color? Bright, vibrant colors?)

Objects to Describe:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Color of these objects:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Topic Sentence:

3. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 1.



Write Your Descriptive Paragraph

Today you will use the ideas you brainstormed yesterday to write a descriptive paragraph. Review the four or five objects you plan to describe listed in the table you completed yesterday under “Objects to Describe”. What color names best suit each object? Review those you listed in the section called “Color of these objects”, and try to improve the color names you listed. If you need help thinking of colors, you might look through a box of crayons, or think of other objects that are a similar color—like oily black or murky-water green. List the final color names next to the object it describes in the column to the right.

When you’re ready, write the first draft of your paragraph. Try to describe not only the color of each object, but also how the color and the object appear—whether it’s muted, bold, faded, translucent, shimmering, etc. Can you communicate the time of day in your scene simply in your description of the color?

When you’re finished, review your paragraph one more time to make sure you haven’t accidentally misspelled a word or left out something important. You will spend some time polishing the paragraph tomorrow.

Descriptive Paragraph—Polish

All writers need to be able to step back from their work and review it with a critical eye. Read through your paragraph today as though it were any other reading assignment. How does it flow? Does anything jump out at you that you don’t like? Did you find a mistake that you missed yesterday?

When you’ve read through the paragraph, step back and think about it as a whole. Would the paragraph flow better if a few of the sentences were in a different order? Is there a sentence that doesn’t seem to fit like the others do? If so, check to see if the sentence provides a detail that doesn’t support the topic sentence. Could you rewrite this sentence so that it would support the topic better?

Finally, look for one object you described yesterday to improve its description. Add adjectives (describing words) or a simile or metaphor (words or phrases that make a comparison to describe something), or grab a thesaurus to find a new word that will really make the sentence shine.

When you’ve completed all of your edits, rewrite a clean and final version of your paragraph.

Language Arts G

Days 6–10: 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 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i>					
HAND-WRITING						
GRAMMAR						
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	Optional: <i>Wordly Wise 3000</i> (for books 4–12)	Lesson 1D		Lesson 1E	Lesson 2A	
READERS	<i>Mara, Daughter of the Nile</i>	chaps. 10–11	chap. 12	chap. 13	chaps. 14–15	chap. 16
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation—Read; Mechanics Practice	Spatial Organization	Research for Travel Journal	Write the Travel Journal	Dictation—Write
<i>Other Notes</i>						

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Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Sentence Basics Verbs: action; helping; form—singular/plural</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Write a spatial description</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write a travel journal</p>

Creative Expression	
Day 6	Dictation—Read

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

“Then here is the message. Tell him he must journey to the River of Darkness, as we talked of long ago. He must take the treasure of him who sleeps there, even the royal cobra from his brow and the collar of amulets—”

“River of Darkness?” Mara choked on the words.

“Aye. He must take from the dead the gold Egypt must have to live! He must go down into the land of night and bring it forth to me.”¹

Mechanics Practice

Today your students will learn about **verbs: action verbs, helping verbs**, and **singular and plural verbs**. See the **Week 2 Activity Sheet** for more information.

Answers:

1. *sung; hung; thought; called; forgot; waiting; resume*
2. *had sung; did [not] matter; were waiting; must resume*
3. *s—was; p—were; s—writes; p—write; p—gulp; s—gulps*

Day
6

Optional Dictation

Sparta, in spite of her laws, her military drill (the best in the world), her splendid, fearless, beautiful men, was really a savage state.

But Athens was civilized.

That means that the Athenians were just and reasonable, and loved other things rather than fighting and bloodshed. Athenians also were free to think and speak out, but the Spartans did not dare to think or to speak what they thought.²

Day
7

Spatial Organization

Architects, engineers, aviators, and designers use spatial organization on a regular basis. In their careers they utilize spatial organization to create three-dimensional projects or to navigate three-dimensional objects. Spatial skills are easier for some students, especially those who excel in math and logical reasoning. This assignment challenges all learners to become spatial thinkers and to communicate their ideas on paper. See “Spatial Organization” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet** for directions.

Day
8

Research for Travel Journal

Your students will need to research information about Ancient Egypt for this assignment. Also, keep a map of the Nile River available for your students. See “Research for Travel Journal” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet** for more information.

Day
9

Write the Travel Journal

Have your students follow the directions on “Write the Travel Journal” on the **Week 2 Activity Sheet**.

Limit your student’s journal to a single entry that includes descriptions of two monuments or places. Evaluate your students work based upon how well they are able to use descriptive language to bring what’s inside their imaginations to life. Give extra credit if they think to include spatial organization and describe the objects as they pass them on their journey. Here’s what a sample paragraph about passing the Giza pyramids might look like:

As I looked out at the horizon, I could begin to see shapes taking form in the distance. What was blurry at first soon became clear, as the triangular shapes of the pyramids at Giza came into view. Even though I had heard many stories about the pyramids, seeing them up-close still took my breath away. These marvels of modern architecture proudly displayed what an advanced society ours had become.

How to Evaluate This Week’s Assignment

This assignment involves many different skills: research, descriptive writing, spatial organization, and a good imagination! Pay attention to how your students work through each step of the process—taking notes, checking reference materials, looking for inspiration in *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*. If these behaviors are not independent yet, provide as much guidance as needed, but be sure your students complete the actual writing on their own.

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

1. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 92.

2. Caroline Dale Snedeker, *Theras and His Town*, (American Home School Publishing: Cameron, MO, 2005), 137.

Travel Journal Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The entries describe two places accurately
_____	5 pts	The entries use language effectively to create vivid descriptions
_____	5 pts	The entries sound like a travel journal and are easy to understand
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	The entries are organized logically, with a main topic and supporting details
_____	5 pts	The entries use correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The entries use correct capitalization and punctuation
<i>Bonus</i>		
_____	2 pts	The entries include spatial organization and describe objects as they are encountered
_____	÷ 30 pts possible = _____%	
Total pts		

Read the dictation passage aloud and have your students write the passage on a separate piece of paper. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention.

“Then here is the message. Tell him he must journey to the River of Darkness, as we talked of long ago. He must take the treasure of him who sleeps there, even the royal cobra from his brow and the collar of amulets—”

“River of Darkness?” Mara choked on the words.

“Aye. He must take from the dead the gold Egypt must have to live! He must go down into the land of night and bring it forth to me.”³ ■

3. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 92.



Dictation—Read

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. At the end of the week, your mom or dad will read the passage and you will write it on a separate piece of paper.

“Then here is the message. Tell him he must journey to the River of Darkness, as we talked of long ago. He must take the treasure of him who sleeps there, even the royal cobra from his brow and the collar of amulets—”
 “River of Darkness?” Mara choked on the words.
 “Aye. He must take from the dead the gold Egypt must have to live! He must go down into the land of night and bring it forth to me.”¹

Mechanics Practice

Do you remember the purpose verbs serve in a sentence? **Verbs** express actions or states of being. While nouns are the people, places, and things in a sentence, verbs tell what those people, places, and things *do* or *are*. **Action verbs** describe just that—the action.

For example:

- Nate rode his bike around the block.
- Milind fixes computers in his spare time.
- We eat dinner with Nan and Chris every Saturday.

Helping (or **auxiliary**) **verbs** when paired with another verb help control verb tenses, and they express a sense of necessity, certainty, probability, or possibility. For example:

- The doctor *will* come soon.
- There *might* be trouble next door.
- Elvis *has* left the building.

1. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, (Puffin Books: New York, 1985), 92.

Here is a list of common helping verbs:

Helping Verbs				
has	have	had	do	did
should	would	could	is	are
	was	were	been	

Have you ever noticed that verbs change slightly when the subject of the sentence is either singular or plural? Read the following sentence pairs. Do you notice a pattern in how the **verb form** changes?

- He *walks*. We *walk*.

- She *skips*. They *skip*.

- Jeanette *talks*. Jeanette and Amber *talk*.

When the subject is singular, we use a singular verb, and when the subject is plural, we use a plural verb. However, the rule for singular and plural verbs is just opposite from singular and plural nouns: while most nouns that end in -s are plural, but most verbs ending in -s are singular (or pair with a singular subject). So:

Singular Verbs	Plural Verbs
walks	walk
skips	skip
talks	talk

Read the passage below and then answer the questions that follow.

After we had sung the final note, our voices hung for a moment in the frigid air. It didn't matter which side of the wire we were on. We all thought of the places we called home, and for a moment forgot we were waiting for daylight when the fighting and the war must resume.

- Look at the passage above and write all of the action verbs you find:

- Write the helping verb that modifies each of the following verbs from the sample passage:



Language Arts G: Week 2 Activity Sheet

_____ sung
 _____ [not] matter
 _____ waiting
 _____ resume

3. Use **s** to identify each verb as singular, **p** for plural.

_____ was	_____ write
_____ were	_____ gulp
_____ writes	_____ gulps

Spatial Organization

Writers use spatial organization in descriptive text. Spatial organization arranges details of a place or thing in a logical order. If you were to describe your bedroom, you might start with the first thing a person would see when entering your room. Then you might move clockwise around the room and describe the items in order as if the person were circling your room. You would end with the person leaving the room. If you didn't describe objects in a logical order, you could easily confuse the reader about where objects are located in your room.

In the example below, Mara and the princess Inanni go outside and down the stairs of the palace for the first time. The author describes the setting using spacial organization. The writer not only describes the storerooms and workshops but also includes what the characters see in those rooms as they pass:

At the bottom they found themselves in the first of a series of walled courts and gardens, through which they passed without encountering anyone more frightening than a few slaves or hurrying servants. Inanni began to relax. She peered curiously at the storerooms and shedlike workshops, catching glimpses of basket makers and glass blowers still at work, of hundreds of stacked wine jars, mountains of baled linen, the neat rows of a kitchen garden. There were vineyards, date groves, curving flower beds in which scarlet sage and larkspur glowed against dark tamarisk trees. As they entered a broad paved area surrounded by weavers' stalls, Inanni gave a start of joy and stopped.

—from *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, p. 99

Use spatial organization to describe your favorite place in one paragraph. Perhaps this place is somewhere near home or at home. It could be a place where you go to think or to relax. Maybe your favorite place is a family camping spot or someplace you've only visited one time but would like to return to someday. Decide on the order in which you want to write about that place. Will you describe it from a specific perspective? For example, if your favorite place is sitting on a rock looking down from a mountain, you would describe the scene from that point. If you use yourself as the focal point, describe what is closest to you and work your description in points that get farther and farther away from you. Will you describe from top to bottom or from side to side?

Use the chart to plan and then write your description. If needed, continue your paragraph on another piece of paper.



Introduction:

Give an overview of what you will describe.

Plan of Organization:

Make a list of the details you plan to describe for your spatial description.

Write Your Description:

Use sensory details and spatial organization.

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Research for Travel Journal

In the book *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* by Eloise Jarvis McGraw, the setting begins in Menfe (Memphis), Egypt. Prior to the story's opening, Thutmose III reigned as king in the 1400's BC. The Egyptians built many structures before that time period. Mara, the protagonist, travels up the Nile River to Thebes, which was the capital of Ancient Egypt. As she travels, what does Mara see? What was the setting really like?

Travel back to Ancient Egypt and take the role of a scribe who is traveling up the Nile River from Memphis to the city of Thebes.

Look at the map of the Nile River, the longest river in the world. To travel from Memphis to Thebes, which direction would you go?

Tomorrow, you will write a travel journal entry about your trip. Today, identify and write an interesting fact or two about the following places. Feel free to look in outside resources if needed:

Pyramids of Giza

The Sphinx



Language Arts G: Week 2 Activity Sheet

Saqqara

Deir el-Bahari

Write the Travel Journal

People keep travel journals to record their journeys. This helps travelers remember more about their experiences and share their memories with friends and family. Historians recreate events with the aid of travel journals. Write a travel journal entry about two of the places you researched yesterday.

As you write, concentrate on describing the places as if you were actually there. Describe your journey using spatial organization. Give your readers mental images of the scenes.

Use your five senses to give your reader a sense for the atmosphere. What does it sound like, smell like, taste like, feel like, and look like? Mara sees crocodiles and smells fish mixed with mud.

If you're traveling south, can you tell the reader on which side of the boat you saw certain objects?

Use colorful adjectives and action verbs in your description. Write at least one paragraph about two of the places.

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 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
SPELLING	<i>Spelling You See</i>					
HAND-WRITING						
GRAMMAR						
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT	Optional: <i>Wordly Wise 3000</i> (for books 4–12)	Lesson 2B		Lesson 2C	Lesson 2D	
READERS	<i>Mara, Daughter of the Nile</i>	chaps. 17–18	chaps. 19–20	chap. 21	chaps. 22–23	chaps. 24–25
CREATIVE EXPRESSION		Dictation—Read; Mechanics Practice	Identify Elaboration	Write a Paragraph to Elaborate	Add Elaboration in Your Paragraph	Dictation—Write
<i>Other Notes</i>						

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Weekly Overview
<p>Mechanics Practice: Sentence Basics Pronouns: personal; subject; possessive; gender; antecedents</p> <p>Creative Expression:</p> <p><u>Skill:</u> Use elaboration to develop secondary support</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Write a paragraph with elaboration</p>

Creative Expression

Day 11	Dictation—Read
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Read through the dictation passage with your students. Work with them to note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. At the end of the week, you will read the passage aloud and have your students write it on a separate sheet of paper.

Then as the minstrel's tale came to an end, and Phaethon fell from heaven in a trail of gleaming fire, the king turned to his chief guest and drank a toast to him, saying, "Tell me, Bellerophon, do you not think that Phaethon was wise? He aspired to be like a god, and though he failed, his end was glorious, and he has become a hero of song. Would you not rather try some impossible feat and die than rest content with the knowledge that there were things you dared not do?"

"I dare do all things," answered the young Bellerophon, his blue eyes sparkling. "I dare even mount to Olympus and battle with the gods. What matter if I fail? I shall still die a hero because I aimed for mighty deeds."¹

Mechanics Practice

Today your students will learn about **pronouns** and **anecdotes**, the **gender of pronouns**, and how pronouns may be used in a sentence. For more information, see the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

This week we discuss subject pronouns. Pronouns may also serve as objects, which we will discuss further when your students learn about transitive verbs and direct objects.

Answers:

"We" refers to Zachary and Xander

1. *he; his; his; him*
2. *his; her; their*
3. *He; They; I*

Day
11

Optional Dictation

Later still there was found on the island of Scyros a mighty skeleton, taller than most men and buried with bronze-headed spear and sword. Taking these for the bones of Theseus, the Athenians brought them home and buried them. From that day the tomb of Theseus was a place of refuge for poor men and slaves and all who had suffered wrong. While they were there, no man could harm them. In this way the Athenians honored the memory of the just hero who was kind to the oppressed.²

Day
12

Identify Elaboration

Today your students will learn about primary and secondary support in a paragraph, and how to use elaboration to develop secondary support. Have your students follow the directions under "Identify Elaboration" on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Answers:

(Answers may vary.)

1. Most whales are enormous. One kind, the blue whale, is the largest animal that has ever lived. [Blue whales can grow up to 100 feet (30 meters) long. They may weigh over 150 tons (135 metric tons).] But some kinds of whales are much smaller. For example, beluga whales usually reach only 13 to 16 feet (4 to 5 meters) long and weigh about 1 ton (0.9 metric ton)...

Whales rank among the most intelligent animals. They have large brains and show evidence of advance thought-processing capabilities similar to those seen in chimpanzees and elephants. Some whales also engage in complex social behavior. [For example, female sperm whales live in groups made up of close relatives and their calves. Evidence suggests that older females lead the group, teaching feeding locations and migration routes to younger whales. The older females also help defend the calves against threats.]

2. Turtles vary greatly in size. The largest turtle species, the sea-dwelling leatherback turtle, grows from 4 to 8 feet (1.2 to 2.4 meters) long and weighs up to 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms). But the common bog turtle of the eastern United States measures only about 4 inches (10 centimeters) and weighs about 4 ounces (110 grams).³

3. Great extremes of wealth and poverty characterize Egyptian cities. Attractive residential areas exist beside vast slums. Lack of sufficient housing is a serious problem. [Many people crowd into small apartments. Many more build makeshift huts on land that belongs to other people, or on the roofs of apartment buildings. Some of the poorest people in Cairo take refuge in historic tombs on the outskirts of the city, in an area known as the City of the Dead.]

The cities provide a variety of jobs. Educated Egyptians work in such professions as business and government. Workers with little or no education find jobs at factories or as unskilled laborers.⁴

1. Olivia E. Coolidge, *Greek Myths* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 147.

2. Olivia E. Coolidge, *Greek Myths* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 212.

3. Means, D. Bruce, "Turtle," World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar571480 (accessed December 12, 2016).

4. Reimer, Michael J., "Egypt," World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar175040 (accessed December 12, 2016).

4. Deserts cannot support large numbers of people. The dry climate generally restricts farming to river valleys or oases. [At an oasis, underground water originating in distant mountain streams comes close enough to the surface for wells and springs to exist. Oases often serve as sites for settlements and irrigated farms.] Some desert cities bring in water from far away by canal or pipeline.⁵

Day
13

Write a Paragraph to Elaborate

Today your students will write a paragraph that contains only the major facts about an event they attended recently. They will elaborate upon this paragraph tomorrow. Have your students follow the directions under “Write a Paragraph to Elaborate” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Here’s what a paragraph with only major facts (primary support) might look like:

My family had a great time at my sister Maggie’s swim meet last weekend. She swam in seven events. In five of the seven events, she beat her previous best time. She received either a ribbon or a medal in six of the seven events. We were very proud of her.

Day
14

Add Elaboration in Your Paragraph

Today your students will elaborate upon the facts they wrote about in their paragraphs yesterday. Have them follow the directions under “Add Elaboration in Your Paragraph” on the **Week 3 Activity Sheet**.

Here’s what a paragraph with additional elaboration (secondary support) might look like:

My family had a great time at my sister Maggie’s swim meet last weekend. Maggie was really nervous, because it was her first ever divisional meet. She swam in seven events. Over the course of the weekend, she swam all four strokes: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle. In five of the seven events, she beat her previous best time. In the 50-yard backstroke, for example, she shaved over three seconds off of her previous best time. That’s almost unheard of! She received either a ribbon or a medal in six of the seven events. She was so happy to have performed so well at her first big divisional swim meet. We were very proud of her.

How to Evaluate This Week’s Assignment

For this assignment, consider both the first draft of the paragraph and the elaborated version. What did your students add to their writing? Does the elaboration help readers better understand the content? Does the paragraph still flow naturally? Also, consider whether there is

5. Rogerson, Robert J, “Desert,” World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar155700 (accessed December 12, 2016).

any extra information that doesn’t help support the main topic.

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

Elaborated Paragraph Rubric		
<i>Content</i>		
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses a topic sentence and supporting details
_____	5 pts	The paragraph includes elaboration for secondary support (examples, facts, reasons, etc.)
_____	5 pts	The paragraph flows naturally and is easy to follow
<i>Mechanics</i>		
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses complete sentences with a variety of sentence structures
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses correct spelling
_____	5 pts	The paragraph uses correct capitalization and punctuation
_____ ÷ 30 pts possible = _____%		
Total pts		

Day
15

Dictation—Write

Read the dictation passage aloud and have your students write the passage on a separate piece of paper. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention.

Then as the minstrel’s tale came to an end, and Phaethon fell from heaven in a trail of gleaming fire, the king turned to his chief guest and drank a toast to him, saying, “Tell me, Bellerophon, do you not think that Phaethon was wise? He aspired to be like a god, and though he failed, his end was glorious, and he has become a hero of song. Would you not rather try some impossible feat and die than rest content with the knowledge that there were things you dared not do?”

“I dare do all things,” answered the young Bellerophon, his blue eyes sparkling. “I dare even mount to Olympus and battle with the gods. What matter if I fail? I shall still die a hero because I aimed for mighty deeds.”⁶ ■

6. Olivia E. Coolidge, *Greek Myths* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 147.



Dictation—Read

Read through the dictation passage. Note any words, capitalizations, or matters of punctuation that require special attention. At the end of the week, your mom or dad will read the passage and you will write it on a separate piece of paper.

Then as the minstrel’s tale came to an end, and Phaethon fell from heaven in a trail of gleaming fire, the king turned to his chief guest and drank a toast to him, saying, “Tell me, Bellerophon, do you not think that Phaethon was wise? He aspired to be like a god, and though he failed, his end was glorious, and he has become a hero of song. Would you not rather try some impossible feat and die than rest content with the knowledge that there were things you dared not do?”

“I dare do all things,” answered the young Bellerophon, his blue eyes sparkling. “I dare even mount to Olympus and battle with the gods. What matter if I fail? I shall still die a hero because I aimed for mighty deeds.”¹

Mechanics Practice

Wouldn’t it be awkward if our language didn’t have pronouns? For example, if we didn’t have pronouns, you might hear someone say something like this:

1. Olivia E. Coolidge, *Greek Myths* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 147.

“Mom,” asked Zachary, “May Zachary go to Xander’s house to play on Xander’s new trampoline? Xander and Zachary would have so much fun! Xander’s mom said it would be okay.”

Pronouns are words—like *I, me, he, she, they, it, mine, yours*, etc.—that are used in place of common or proper nouns. In order for pronouns to make sense, they must follow a common or proper noun. For example:

“Mom,” asked Zachary, “May I go to Xander’s house to play on his new trampoline? We would have so much fun! His mom said it would be okay.”

The noun a pronoun refers to is called its **antecedent**. For example, in the sentence:

“May I go to Xander’s house to play on his new trampoline?”

...*Xander* is the antecedent to which the pronoun *his* refers. Who does the pronoun *we* refer to in our example?

Personal pronouns, which are listed above, are the most common type of pronouns. **Possessive pronouns** show possession or ownership. They may be used alone or before a noun, and they act like an adjective:

This cupcake is *mine*.

Is that *your* coat?

If a pronoun serves as the subject of a sentence, we call it a **subject pronoun**:

He is a great friend.

She rode her bike to the park.

Keep in mind that as you write pronouns, they must agree with the **gender** of the subject. That means you shouldn’t say *she* or *her* if the antecedent of the pronoun is male. Instead, write:

Andrew lay **his** books on the table.

1. What pronouns do you see in the passage below? Circle them.

An hour later he was crossing the worn stone wharfs to the *Beetle’s* anchorage. Nekonkh hung over the gunwale, his arms propped wide, his shoulders burnished copper in the brilliant sunlight. Every line of him spelled anxiety. Sheftu stepped into the cool shadow of the



Language Arts G: Week 3 Activity Sheet

hull, swung onto the rope ladder and climbed up through the blue-green dancing reflections into the glare of sun on deck.²

2. Complete the following with pronouns that agree with the given antecedents.

Michael carried _____ ball glove home.

Catherine mailed three cards to _____ Grandma.

Rodney and Harriet went to _____ son's play.

3. Complete the following with subject pronouns.

_____ washed the dishes for his mother.

_____ took pictures of their project.

_____ washed my car today.

Identify Elaboration

Has anyone ever told you a story but left out important details? You might understand parts of the story, but you can't make a connection between some of the events. In conversation, you would ask the person to back up and elaborate so that you could understand the relationships among the events. The reader doesn't have the opportunity to ask the writer for more details, so you have to be sure to include them when you write.

One essential part of the paragraph is **elaboration**. Elaboration uses detail to develop secondary support for a paragraph. The primary support sentences contain the major points about the topic sentence. The secondary support explains the primary support and provides details about it.

Read the paragraph below. It contains only primary support.

The Olympics in Ancient Greece began in 776 B. C. It was a religious event in honor of the god Zeus. During the first thirteen years of the Olympics, the only event was the stadium race. It was a time that each man could show his physical strength. The athletes thought if they won the race Zeus would favor them.

Read the paragraph with elaboration below. It contains primary and secondary support.

The Olympics in Ancient Greece began in 776 B.C. Men from Greek city states gathered to compete at Olympia every four years. It was a religious event in honor of the god Zeus. Before the competition began, the men offered one hundred oxen as a sacrifice to Zeus. During the first thirteen years of the Olympics, the only event was the stadium race. Later, the Greeks added other events such as boxing, wrestling, and chariot racing. It was a time that each man could show his physical strength. Each man trained for ten months prior to the event and had to take an oath that he had trained during that whole time. Men connected their physical strength to military training. The athletes thought if they won the races that Zeus would favor them.

Secondary support includes examples, facts, reasons, descriptions, and steps or procedures. Just like each primary support sentence relates to the topic sentence, each secondary sentence relates to the primary support and provides more information to the reader.

For each of the paragraphs below, double-underline the topic sentence and underline the primary support sentences. Put brackets [] around the sentences that add extra detail.

1. Most whales are enormous. One kind, the blue whale, is the largest animal that has ever lived. Blue whales can grow up to 100 feet (30 meters) long. They may weigh over 150 tons (135 metric tons). But some kinds of whales are much smaller. For example, beluga whales usually reach only 13 to 16 feet (4 to 5 meters) long and weigh about 1 ton (0.9 metric ton)...

Whales rank among the most intelligent animals. They have large brains and show evidence of advanced thought-processing capabilities similar to those seen in chimpanzees and elephants. Some whales also engage in complex social behavior. For example, female

2. Eloise Jarvis McGraw, *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 217–218.



sperm whales live in groups made up of close relatives and their calves. Evidence suggests that older females lead the group, teaching feeding locations and migration routes to younger whales. The older females also help defend the calves against threats.

2. Turtles vary greatly in size. The largest turtle species, the sea-dwelling leatherback turtle, grows from 4 to 8 feet (1.2 to 2.4 meters) long and weighs up to 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms). But the common bog turtle of the eastern United States measures only about 4 inches (10 centimeters) and weighs about 4 ounces (110 grams).³
3. Great extremes of wealth and poverty characterize Egyptian cities. Attractive residential areas exist beside vast slums. Lack of sufficient housing is a serious problem. Many people crowd into small apartments. Many more build makeshift huts on land that belongs to other people, or on the roofs of apartment buildings. Some of the poorest people in Cairo take refuge in historic tombs on the outskirts of the city, in an area known as the City of the Dead.

The cities provide a variety of jobs. Educated Egyptians work in such professions as business and government. Workers with little or no education find jobs at factories or as unskilled laborers.⁴
4. Deserts cannot support large numbers of people. The dry climate generally restricts farming to river valleys or oases. At an oasis, underground water originating

in distant mountain streams comes close enough to the surface for wells and springs to exist. Oases often serve as sites for settlements and irrigated farms.

Some desert cities bring in water from far away by canal or pipeline.⁵

Write a Paragraph to Elaborate

Sometimes it's easier to identify elaboration in someone else's writing than in your own. Writers use secondary support to give readers a clear message and, if applicable, visual imagery.

Your primary support is like a sandwich with two slices of bread and lunch meat. It would be a very bland sandwich if you didn't add to it. In order to make the sandwich more appetizing, you would do well to add lettuce, tomato, cheese, pickles, and mustard. When you elaborate in a paragraph, you add the interesting details and examples to make it more appealing.

The Greeks had the Olympics for athletic competition and drama for entertainment. Think about a sports game, a play, or other event that you have recently attended. Then write a paragraph that includes only the major facts about the event.

Add Elaboration in Your Paragraph

Yesterday, you wrote a paragraph about an event. The directions called for you to write only the major facts about the event. Now add elaboration between those sentences. You should add at least one or two sentences of secondary support to your primary support.

Use details, examples, and evidence for your secondary support. Instead of writing that the team won the game, describe how they won it. Give an example of a key player on the team and a specific action that helped the team win the game. If you are writing about a play, explain with details why a certain part was especially entertaining.

When you are finished adding elaboration to your paragraph, underline or highlight the sentences that you added. Notice how much you added and how easy it really is to elaborate. Compare your original paragraph to this paragraph. Discuss how the paragraph that you wrote today relates more information to the reader.

3. Means, D. Bruce, "Turtle," World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar571480 (accessed December 12, 2016).

4. Reimer, Michael J., "Egypt," World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar175040 (accessed December 12, 2016).

5. Rogerson, Robert J., "Desert," World Book Student, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar155700 (accessed December 12, 2016).

Section Three

Reading Assignments and Notes

Readers

Day
1

Chapters 1–2

Setting

Egypt; 1400s BC

Overview

Mara, a slave, becomes a spy for Queen Hatshepsut (?–1469 BC), the pharaoh, whose extravagant building projects and excursions inflict heavy taxes on the Egyptians. Shortly thereafter, Sheftu, a young nobleman, enlists Mara’s help as a spy for Thutmose, the true king, a man imprisoned by the powerful Queen. Mara prefers to help the King, but must continue to serve the Queen, lest she be sold. A traitor to the King finally betrays Mara, and Sheftu, thinking Mara betrayed him, although he loves her, seeks to kill her. When he discovers that Mara serves the king as whole-heartedly as he does, Sheftu purposefully walks into a trap to save her, and then the revolution occurs, quickly and easily. Thutmose takes the throne, Hatshepsut drinks poison, and Sheftu, now Count, marries Mara.

Cultural Literacy

Use the following words as you discuss today’s reading to enhance your student’s understanding of the story.

Set: or Seth; an ancient god of the desert, storms, darkness and chaos. [chap. 1]

shenti: a loincloth or scarf worn by men, wrapped around their waists and held by a belt. [chap. 1]

kheft: a lost soul or demon. [chap. 1]

Kush: a kingdom south of Egypt. Pharaohs took control of Kush during the New Kingdom, so a “son of Kush” would be someone from this land. Since they were a conquered people group, an Egyptian would consider this phrase less than flattering. [chap. 1]

Hatshepsut (1503–1482 BC): the fourth female pharaoh in Egyptian history. The daughter of King Thutmose I and his chief wife, Queen Ahmose, Hatshepsut married her half-brother, King Thutmose II. When Thutmose died unexpectedly about 1490 BC, Hatshepsut’s stepson, Thutmose III, inherited the throne. But because he was too young to rule, Hatshepsut served as regent (temporary ruler). Within a few years, and with the support of the priests of the god Amon, Hatshepsut had herself crowned pharaoh alongside her stepson. Because Egyptians believed their kings were divine, she justified her new role by claiming to be the god Amon’s daughter. She also had herself represented as a man on monuments.¹ [chap. 1]

Thutmose III: Egyptian Pharaoh that reigned from 1504–1450 BC. Thutmose III was son of Thutmose II, and son-in-law to Queen Hatshepsut, as he married her daughter—his own half-sister. As an adult ruler, Thutmose III conducted 17 successful campaigns which served him a position as the most successful Pharaoh ever—in military terms. He extended Egyptian territory and power considerably, into Mesopotamia and Nubia. The conquered territories were put under control of vassal kings and chiefs, who paid high taxes to Egypt. He extended the temple at Karnak, as well as constructed new monuments at Abydos, Aswan, Heliopolis, and Memphis. His mummy was found in 1881 at Dayru I-Bahri. He was succeeded by Amenhotep II.² [chap. 1]

gamin: street boy. [chap. 2]

scarab: a stone beetle used as a talisman or ornament. [chap. 2]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Once Nekonkh realizes he’s been speaking poorly of Hatshepsut, what does he do? Why? [chap. 1]
- A: *he denies making a statement that he would like to overthrow the Pharaoh and immediately makes statements to show he supports her. He does this because it was treason to speak against the Queen, and the punishment for doing so was harsh*
- Q: What makes Mara a valuable spy? [chap. 2]
- A: *she speaks Babylonian, reads and writes well, is sharp-witted, does not look like a slave, is proud, and desires freedom*

Khofra mentions that the Euphrates “flows the wrong way” (p. 26). Since the Euphrates flows in a south-easterly direction, whereas the Nile River flows in a northward direction, a river that flows in nearly the opposite direction would seem backwards to him.

Day
2

Chapters 3–4

Cultural Literacy

carnelian: pale, red quartz. [chap. 4]

gambits: moves early in a game in which a player sacrifices lesser pieces in order to obtain an advantageous position. [chap. 4]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did Sheftu threaten Mara at the end of their conversation? [chap. 4]
- A: *because Mara said she intended to discover his secrets if she could—clearly Sheftu would rather remain secretive and somewhat anonymous*

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1. 2003 *World Book Encyclopedia* (World Book, Inc.: Chicago, 2002).

2. “Tuthmosis 3,” LookLex Encyclopaedia, http://i-cias.com/e.o/thutmose_3.htm. (Accessed July 2, 2015).

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why do you think Mara is not happy with her second job? [chap. 5]
- A: *possible: she is beginning to like Sheftu; she dislikes the Queen's extravagance; perhaps she is intrigued by the idea of doing something for Egypt rather than just for herself*
- Q: At the end of the chapter, who do you think has the upper hand—Mara or Sheftu? Why? [chap. 5]
- A: *realistically, Mara still does—she already knows the name of the other member in Pharaoh's court that is leading the rebellion, and her present course of action hasn't changed from the time she boarded the ship*

Cultural Literacy

El Karnak ruins (Thebes), Egypt: Thebes is located along the Nile River at the site of what is now the city of Luxor.³ [chap. 6]

loggia: a roofed open gallery, especially at an upper story overlooking an open court. [chap. 7]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How did the wharfs of Abydos differ from those at Menfe? Why? [chap. 6]
- A: *they had more funeral barges because the god Osiris was thought to be buried in Abydos, and all who could afford it would arrange for their funeral processions to take a pilgrimage to this "Gate of the Underworld" before their entombment*
- Q: How does Mara keep cool in the Egyptian heat? [chap. 6]
- A: *she does not wear wool except in the cool nights; wears thin, light garments; stays slender; sleeps on an ebony headrest, not a hot pillow*

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why did Hatshepsut like what she saw in Inanni? [chap. 8]
- A: *because she knew her half-brother, the King, would NOT like marrying Inanni*
- Q: What was clever about Sheftu's response to the order from Hatshepsut? [chap. 8]
- A: *he gave praise to Pharaoh without specifying which pharaoh he meant*
- Q: Why is Mara's meeting with Thutmose difficult? [chap. 9]
- A: *she must not only speak in two languages and carry on two conversations, but Inanni's hopes and Thutmose's pacing and expression made her job more difficult*

3. "Karnak Temple," Discovering Ancient Egypt, <http://discoveringegypt.com/karnak-temple/>. (Accessed January 2006).

- Q: Why was Mara concerned about the message she was to take to Sheftu? [chap. 9]
- A: *because he was being asked to rob the tomb of a pharaoh—a crime not only punishable in the human world but also believed to anger the ka of the departed one—something Egyptians believed would bring harm to tomb robbers*

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What relieves Inanni at the end of her long day? [chap. 10]
- A: *she will not marry Thutmose, she can return to Canaan and her brothers, and she will visit the Syrian woman in the Court of the Weavers*
- Q: How could Mara tell by looking around the Queen's court who the most important people were? [chap. 11]
- A: *the more important a person was—those the Queen valued—stood closer to her throne*
- Q: What does Mara learn during her audience with her master? [chap. 11]
- A: *Thutmose's servants are all loyal to the Queen*

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Think about the steps Mara had to take before she met with Sheftu again. What does it tell you about the organization of the rebellion that is brewing? [chap. 12]
- A: *it's highly organized—there seems to be many supporters with useful ways they can contribute*
- Q: Why do you think Sheftu goes by Sashai at the Inn of the Falcon? [chap. 12]
- A: *to conceal his identity to those he's working with. In case some were captured, they wouldn't be able to identify their true leader*

Cultural Literacy

languid: slow, sluggish. [chap. 13]

chicanery: deception, trickery. [chap. 13]

guile: deceitful, cunning. [chap. 13]

insouciance: lighthearted, unconcern. [chap. 13]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What does Mara learn about the proprietors of the Inn of the Falcon? [chap. 13]
- A: *the inn keeper's wife was Sheftu's childhood nurse, and her husband was the head of his father's stables*

- Q: How does Thutmose prepare to take the throne? [chap. 13]
- A: *he stages a miracle where, during a festival, "Amon" proclaims him pharaoh—the people remember and think it true; the priests are mostly on his side, as are many young nobles and commoners concerned with the state of the country*
- Q: What do you think of Sahure, the juggler? Do you trust him? Why or why not? [chap. 13]
- A: *possible: he presses for information in a rather sly way: Sheftu is clearly not completely forthcoming with him, though he was claimed as useful*

Day
9

Chapters 14–15

Cultural Literacy

balustrade: a low parapet (railing) or barrier. [chap. 14]

major-domo: a head butler or steward of a large household. [chap. 14]

obelisks: an upright, 4-sided pillar that is topped with a pyramid. [chap. 14]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: What has Sheftu learned in the last six years about mankind? Do you think he is correct? [chap. 14]
- A: *no man or woman lives whom gold cannot buy—only the prices differ*
- Q: Do you think Hatshepsut is extravagant? Why or why not? [chap. 14]
- A: *yes—This chapter describes obelisks the Queen had added to the temple of Amon. They were 97 feet tall "needles of stone," cut from single blocks of granite, and so tall the roof of the hall had to be removed so they could be installed. Once there, the queen thought they were too dull so she ordered them covered with priceless electrum—all for her own glory*
- Q: Why do you think Sheftu asked the priest to obtain the Royal Seal? [chap. 14]
- A: *when tombs were shut, priests would seal the door shut and mark the seal with a particular mark so it would be easy to tell if the tomb had been disturbed. Once Sheftu raided the old Pharaoh's tomb, they would have more time to finish their plans if the tomb looked as if it was never disturbed, so they'd need the Royal Seal with the right mark on it to reseal the door*
- Q: Consider the news Sheftu gives Khofra in a modern light: The President of the United States regularly receives intelligence of uprisings on our Canadian and Mexican borders. On top of that, he gets word of several European countries that are banding together against us. Then, a news report tells you that the President has dismissed the entire Army branch of the military (and hasn't paid the Marines in a month) so he can put more money toward carving his face into a mountain near Mt. Rushmore. How would you feel? Is Sheftu's anger over a similar situation justified? [chap. 15]

- Q: Even queens need to acquire gold—we all have limited dollars. What does she spend her gold on? [chap. 15]
- A: *to cover the obelisks in electrum*
- Q: How does Mara deliver her message, even though the spies were not dismissed? [chap. 15]
- A: *she draws symbols of the message onto a vase design*
- Q: Do you think the king's opinion of Inanni has changed at all? Why or why not? [chap. 15]
- A: *somewhat—she admired his drawings of vases so he is beginning to see her as more than a "barbarian"*

Day
10

Chapter 16

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why is it important for the king to become pharaoh?
- A: *for Egypt, for the sake of the people*

Day
11

Chapters 17–18

Cultural Literacy

time immemorial: time that extends beyond memory or record. [chap. 17]

leonine: lion-like. [chap. 17]

lee: the side that is sheltered from the wind or weather. [chap. 17]

mien: dignified manner or conduct. [chap. 17]

Hall of Double Truth: After death, a soul first went to the Hall of Double Truth for judgment. The soul had to make a "negative confession" before 42 gods. The deceased souls would list all of the evil deeds they did *not* commit during their lifetime in order to convince the gods to allow them to enter the netherworld. If the souls successfully passed this test, they would move to the Weighing of the Heart ceremony.⁴ [chap. 18]

hawser: a thick, heavy rope or cable used for mooring or towing a ship. [chap. 18]

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: Why does Pesiur's jab about Sheftu's notice of Mara bother Sheftu? [chap. 17]
- A: *he worries that his meetings with Mara and the Canaanite princess have been noticed, and that the feelings he has for Mara that he thought he'd kept hidden had been noticed by a casual observer*
- Q: How does Sheftu enter the Valley of the Kings? [chap. 17]
- A: *he arrives with a priest; they claim they've heard reports of tomb robbery; one guard believes them, one does not, and this one follows them, even though his duty ends in another half hour*

4. Pat Remler, *Egyptian Mythology A to Z, Third Edition*, (Chelsea House: New York, 2010).

Q: What does Sheftu do to the diligent guard? [chap. 17]
A: *at first, he strangles him to knock him out, hoping they can send him away on Nekonkh's boat until the revolution is over, but the guard starts to escape so Sheftu has to kill him*

Q: In addition to Sheftu and companions, fear of their gods and the knowledge they have of crime they are about to commit, what else could make the trip inside the tomb a stressful experience for these characters? [chap. 18]

A: *it is incredibly dark, their one torch doesn't seem to push the darkness back very far; it is hot, the air is stale and probably hard to breathe—they risk running out of air as they work deep underground; the tomb is built like a maze, intended to be confusing to make it harder to plunder; they realize as their torch dies that they don't have another torch with them*

Day
12

Chapters 19–20

Cultural Literacy

flagon: a large pitcher made from metal or pottery, with a handle and a spout, and often a lid. [chap. 20]

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How does Mara feel about Sahure? Why do you think this is so? [chap. 19]

A: *she loathes him and she's afraid of him; Possible: because she's nearly almost run into him once as she's fulfilling the role of her other identity, she doesn't trust him to keep quiet about her if it would serve his purposes better, he seems to constantly pry and doesn't easily take "no" for an answer*

Q: How does Sheftu respond to Mara's mistake of keeping the ring? [chap. 19]

A: *his words seem to say he doesn't think any more of the matter, but he lets go of her hand as he speaks, as though he's not sure he trusts her again. Even at the end of the chapter, Mara is unsure if the issue is over or not*

Q: Why did Sheftu comment to Nekonkh on the riverboat "Till now, I understood your allegiance to be to myself and to the king—and no one else. Was I mistaken?" [chap. 20]

A: *because Nekonkh had been defending Mara's actions, and Sheftu needed to remind him that their cause was really more important than another player—should that player be a spy for the queen*

Q: How does Sheftu plot to uncover Mara's treachery? [chap. 20]

A: *Nekonkh tells her the "whereabouts" of the gold in the presence of others; if the location is raided, he will know she is a spy for the other side*

Q: What potential problems does the trap have?

A: *Nekonkh wasn't told to tell Mara privately. If another person who is unfaithful to the cause overhears, they could raid the ship, even if Mara didn't give up her information*

Day
13

Chapter 21

Cultural Literacy

checking a ship's trim: a ship's captain should check a ship's trim to determine if it's perpendicular to the water making sure the cargo is evenly balanced in the ship so it won't capsize as it travels. [chap. 21]

To Discuss After You Read

Q: How do Nekonkh and Sheftu respond once the raiders boarded the ship? [chap. 21]

A: *Nekonkh pleads to take Mara away again—Sheftu's demeanor was such that even the burly riverboat captain was afraid of him. Sheftu curtly reminds Nekonkh that he should strictly follow orders*

Q: What do you think of Sheftu's stubbornness to stick to his plan for Mara's fate, even when Nekonkh offers to take her out of Thebes for a second time? Do you think he would have the same response if another had betrayed him? [chap. 21]

A: *possible: he is angry, but perhaps more so this time because he is also hurt and disappointed in Mara. Therefore, he falls back on his blind devotion to the cause, and makes the best determination in that light as the logical and reasonable course of action. He is a kind man and may have let Nekonkh take another lesser person away, if he or she hadn't wounded him as Mara had*

Day
14

Chapters 22–23

To Discuss After You Read

Q: Why does Mara run away from Nekonkh? [chap. 22]

A: *to find her other master, learn his plans, and then try to slip away from him and warn the revolution*

Q: How has Mara's game "tumbled about her ears?" [chap. 22]

A: *Sahure had been spying on her, and names her and all of the regular attendees at the Inn as traitors. Nahereh plans another raid and locks Mara in her room with an armed guard so she has no way to escape*

Q: Why was Mara—who seems to be able to wriggle out of most scrapes—captured? [chap. 23]

A: *because she told Nekonkh that she would stay in the courtyard until he returned, and for once she meant to keep her word*

To Discuss After You Read

- Q: How does Mara change as a person throughout the story?
- A: *she learns the value of loving and trusting other people, such as friends and family, and why it is worthwhile to remain loyal to them. In exchange, she has made valuable friends and wants to treat them well in the end*
- Q: How does slavery affect Mara and her relationships with others, such as Innani the princess, Reshed the guard, or Sheftu?
- Q: What does Mara learn from Innani (the princess)?
- Q: Juxtaposition means to place close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast. In literature, juxtaposition occurs when one theme or idea or person is parallel to another. The author of *Mara, Daughter of the Nile* juxtaposes the “daughter of the Nile” (Mara) with the “daughter of the sun god” (Hatshepsut). Compare and contrast these women: think about their titles and origins, their personalities, their view of Egypt, their positions, and their value of other people. How are they the same and how are they different? If they are the same at some point in the book, but different at another point of the book, describe that. ■

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

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
1	Nouns: common/proper; gender; concrete/abstract; compound; collective	Write Your Own Descriptive Paragraph (Description/Writing Process)
2	Verbs: action; form—singular/plural	Spatial Organization (Spatial Skills/Organization) Research for Travel Journal (Research) Write the Travel Journal (Creative Expression)
3	Pronouns: personal; subject; possessive; gender; antecedents	Identify Elaboration (Paragraph Organization) Write a Paragraph to Elaborate (Paragraph Organization) Add Elaboration in Your Paragraph (Paragraph Organization)
4	Person of pronouns: 1st, 2nd, 3rd	Point of View (Writing Process) Pre-write a Peace Treaty (Writing Process) Write a Peace Treaty (Writing Process)
5	Types of pronouns: interrogative; demonstrative	Topic and Thesis Sentences (Paragraph Organization) Write a Paragraph with Unity (Paragraph Fluency) Write a Paragraph with Coherence (Paragraph Fluency)
6	More types of pronouns; intensive; reflexive and indefinite	Comparison/Contrast (Analysis) Comparison/Contrast Outlines (Analysis) Write a Comparison/Contrast Essay (Analysis)
7	commas	Transitions (Paragraph Fluency) Revise Comparison/Contrast Essay (Writing Process) The Final Draft (Writing Process)
8	synonyms	Pre-writing the Classification Essay (Classification) Write the Classification Essay (Classification) Revise the Classification Essay (Classification)
9	adjectives—proper and common; compound; articles	Dialogue and Attributions (Narrative) Add Dialogue to the Myth (Narrative)
10	Types of adjectives; demonstrative; indefinite	Symbolism (Analysis) Symbolism in Literature (Analysis) Symbolism in Poetry (Analysis)
11	Types of adverbs; review definition; adverbs of time; of place; of manner, of degree; conjunctive adverbs	Avoiding Clichés (Word Choice) Choice and Tone (Word Choice) The Mystery—Planning (Narrative)
12	Adjective and adverb forms: positive, comparative, superlative	Character Development; Protagonist and Antagonist (Narrative) Write the Plot (Narrative) Writing the Mystery (Narrative)
13	complete sentences; subject/predicate; simple, compound, complete; understood subjects; linking verbs; predicate adjective; predicate nouns	Poetry Dissection (Analysis) Sound Devices (Analysis) Comparison/Contrast Poems (Analysis)
14	Types of subjects and predicates: simple; complete; compound; modifiers	Imagery (Analysis) The Apostrophe in Poetry (Analysis) Use of Theme in Poetry (Analysis)

(continued on the following page)

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
15	capitalization	The Newspaper Article (Analysis) Extra! Extra! Read All About It! (Research) Write a Hard News Article (Informative)
16	plurals	Headlines (Critical Thinking) Research for Interview (Research) Knightly News (Informative)
17	verb tenses: simple; perfect; continuous	Eliminate Redundancy (Sentence Fluency) Eliminate Wordy Sentences (Sentence Fluency) Revise Your Writing (Sentence Fluency)
18	Verb forms: transitive; direct objects; object pronouns; indirect objects; intransitive	Coming Soon to a Bookshelf Near You! (Book Commercial) Summarize the Plot (Persuasion) Write the Book Commercial Script (Persuasion)
19	apostrophes	Novel Log for Literary Analysis, Parts 1 & 2 (Analysis) Part 3: Novel Log—Conflict (Analysis)
20	quotation marks	Parts 4 & 5: Novel Log—Characterization Diagram (Analysis) Part 6: Novel Log—Plot Diagram (Analysis) Part 7: Novel Log—Wrap-Up Questions (Analysis)
21	active and passive voice; avoid “be” verbs	Start with a Thesis Statement (Research Process) Begin Your Research (Research Process) Source Cards (Research Process) Cause and Effect Essay)
22	how to write titles	Note Cards—Quotations (Research Process) Note Cards—Paraphrase (Research Process) More Note Cards & Works Cited (Research Process)
23	phrases: noun, verb, adverb; prepositional phrases, appositive phrases	The Research Paper Online (Research Process) Refine Thesis and Begin Body Paragraphs (Research Process) Complete the Body Paragraphs (Research Process)
24	prepositional phrases: prepositions, object of the preposition	The Introduction and the Conclusion (Research Process) Revision (Research Process) The Final Draft (Research Process)
25	clauses: conjunctions; independent clause; coordinating conjunctions; correlative conjunctions; non-restrictive phrases and clauses	Change the Tone (Exploratory) Change the Setting (Exploratory) Creating Setting and Tone (Productive)
26	Dependent clauses and subordinating conjunctions; relative pronouns; complex sentences	Ad Copy (Critical Thinking) The Head is the Heart (Writing Process) The Body (Writing Process)
27	sentence structure: simple, compound, complex	The Definition of a Hero (Definition) The Protagonist as a Hero (Analysis) Other Types of Characters (Analysis)
28	verbals: gerunds, participles and infinitives	Fairy Tales with a Twist (Creative)
29	agreement: subject-verb; noun-pronoun; improve sentences: fragments; rambling; sentence; run-on; avoid double negatives	Hear Ye, Hear Ye ... (Public Speaking) Vivacious Visuals (Public Speaking) The Presentation (Public Speaking)

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(continued on the following page)

Week	Mechanics Practice	Creative Expression
30	types of sentences: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory	Preparation (Writing Process) Write the Cause and Effect Essay (Writing Process) Revise the Cause and Effect Essay (Writing Process)
31	ellipses and parentheses	The Introduction (Writing Process) The Conclusion (Writing Process) Revising Introductions and Conclusions (Revision)
32	hyphens and dashes	The Biographical Summary (Research) Write the Bio/Leo-graphy (Biographical Writing) Revise the Bio/Leo-graphy (Revision)
33	improve your spelling	Prepare for the Definition Essay (Writing Process) Write the Definition Essay (Writing Process) Revision of the Definition Essay (Writing Process)
34	colons and semicolons; nonrestrictive clauses	Aphorisms (Inquiry) The Kigo (Symbolism) The Tanka (Creative)
35	commonly misused words (homonyms)	Careers—I want to be ... (Research) Business Letter (Communication) Reflective Essay (Reflection)
36	writing numbers	Persuasion (Persuasive) Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want (Persuasive) Smooth Talker (Persuasive)

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.

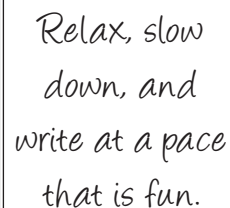
Start with our first writing assignment in Week 1. Ask your students to work on it for a set amount of time each day as it fits into your daily schedule. For older children, this could be part of their independent work time, but be careful not to let it consume all of their time. Of course we're happy 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.

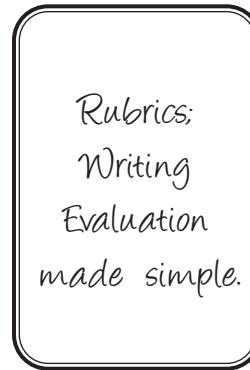
When you create a rubric, first draft a list of all the things you hope the assignment will accomplish, or you hope your child will learn or practice as they complete the assignment. Sometimes it's helpful to list skills by category, so you're sure you've thought of everything you want to evaluate.

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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