

**A Writing Program
For
The Covenant Child**

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PREFACE

Although the true value and primary benefits of a workshop goes directly to those teachers who attend, teachers and educators both inside and outside the field of Protestant Reformed education benefit indirectly through a book such as this one. Because the reproduction of all that took place in the workshop is impossible, a few remarks and explanations about the workshop in general and this book in particular are in order.

The writing workshop met at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School from June 19th until June 30th. The teachers participating in this workshop were as follows: Jean Dykstra, Winifred Koole, and Darrel Huisken, the director, from Hope P. R. Christian School; Beverly Hoekstra from Loveland, Colorado Protestant Reformed Christian School; Karlene Oomkes from South Holland, Illinois Protestant Reformed Christian School; James Huizinga, Agatha Lubbers, Antoinette B. Quenga from Covenant Christian High School.

Both before and during the workshop the members did much reading and studying in the field of writing and the teaching of writing. Depending upon their area and grade level of teaching, they read and studied thoroughly either *The Language Arts Curriculum*, designed for elementary teachers, or *A Writing Program Grades 7-12*, designed for junior and senior high teachers. In addition to one of these National Union of Christian Schools publications the teachers also read one other substantial book in the field of writing. As the workshop progressed, the reading and studying increased as well. They were a hard working group, and this little book reflects only a small portion of their arduous labors.

At the center of their labors was the formulation of distinctive and lucid objectives for the teaching of writing in Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. These objectives appear first in this book because they serve as the basis, the theological basis, for the rest of the work. Without this basis this book would differ very little from any other book on the subject. The form for each objective is basically the same: "We teach the covenant child to write..." This form may seem repetitious, but the members wanted each objective to stand alone so that taken by itself each objective is one complete thought or idea. Also, the use of the words "covenant child" is worthy of note. These teachers, in addition to all those concerned with and involved in Protestant Reformed education, stress forthrightly the truth that true Christian education must have as its core and center God's covenant and God's covenantal relationship with His elect people. In stressing and maintaining this truth the Protestant Reformed educator stands virtually alone.

The objectives are theoretical for the most part, but the courses of study, the ideas for teaching writing, and the evaluation sheets are for the most part practical. Following the three major grade divisions, viz., primary, intermediate, junior and senior high, the members prepared three parts for each division. Part one presents a course of study for the grade division. Part two presents a list of ideas that can be used for teaching some of the ideas on the course of study. Part three presents an evaluation chart—in some cases one for the student as well as for the teacher.

The courses of study are brief and skeletal because the members felt that the teachers who use these could best use them as a framework upon which to build their own courses. One member of the workshop suggested that each teacher make a chart of these courses of study, and after each item make a check if the class as a whole had mastered it. At the end of the year he would pass this chart on, to the next teacher in the

next grade thereby giving that teacher a good idea of what learnings had taken place the previous year. Good ideas such as this one can only build and strengthen a writing program because teachers are working together!

After each course of study is a list of teaching ideas that more or less correspond to the course of study. These ideas, gleaned and garnered from teachers' experiences, resource people, and books and other printed material in the field of writing, are only a beginning but a good one anyway. Although man is fallible, and printing errors are almost commonplace, and the temptation to pad this product is extremely great; the blank pages are *bona fide* blank pages. Hopefully, these blank pages, filled with best teacher ideas, will sprout seeds for another writing workshop.

Also included in this book are two lists of recommended materials. The first one, for grades kindergarten through sixth grade, comes after the intermediate section. The second one, for grades seven through twelve, follows the junior and senior high section. The members concluded after careful study and analysis that these materials are essential and necessary for a good writing program in Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. The members urge the teachers, principals, and boards to purchase these materials. In order to make purchasing easier a list of publishers is included at the back of the book.

Very early in the workshop the members confronted a number of problems that they felt warranted expository essays. The first was the image bearer of God idea as it related to man's cultural responsibility, especially his responsibility to write. Agatha Lubbers, who had researched and written on this subject previously (Cf. "Image of God, the Soul of Man, Man's Heart and Literature", *Literature Studies Guide*), volunteered to revise and edit her previous essay and include it in here also. The second was the problem of the relationship of grammar and writing or composition. James Huizinga, who has had much experience in teaching both, agreed to write a short essay on the subject. Two other essays appear along with these. Winifred Koole, a fourth grade teacher at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, has emphasized throughout her long and fruitful teaching career the need for a rich vocabulary. Her essay and the accompanying ideas are worth some time and thought. At last year's workshop I wrote a paper called "Linguistic Development in the Light of Scripture" and several members thought that it should be included here as well.

The members of the workshop and the director wish to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions to this workshop:

Dr. Richard Tiemersma, Professor of English at Calvin College, for his provocative presentation on "Evaluating Student Writing".

Dr. Stanley Wiersma, Professor of English at Calvin College, for his crisp and refreshing insights into the teaching of creative writing.

The Federating Board of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools for their generosity in sponsoring and financing this workshop.

The National Union of Christian Schools for their generosity in allowing the use of some of their excellent materials for the workshop and for this book.

Above all, thanks be to Jehovah, the covenant making and covenant keeping Heavenly Father, who through Christ Jesus seeks and gathers His children from our children. Blessed be His name.

— Darrel Huisken, Director

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OBJECTIVES FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING

1. We teach the covenant child to write so that, despite the corruption of the curse, he may fulfill the creation mandate to use his talents to subdue the earth (Cf. Genesis 1:28; 3:17-19; Psalm 104:23).
2. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may appreciate the language God has given him (Cf. Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 2:5-11; James 1:17; John 1:1-3; Psalm 68:11).
3. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may be trained to express his heart-directed response to reality, i.e., God and works (Cf. Psalm 51:10; Proverbs 4:23; 16:1-2 and 23-24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; I Thessalonians 1: 11-12).
4. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may discover and interpret reality in the light of the Scriptures (Cf. Psalm 19:14; 119:105; Ephesians 5:16).
5. We teach the covenant child to write so that he can communicate precisely and permanently his interpretations of reality to his fellow man (Cf. Job 19:23-26; Isaiah 30:8; I Corinthians 14:8-9).
6. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may use and sharpen the senses (sensory tools) God has given him. (Cf. Exodus 4:11; Psalm 25:15; 34:8; 40:5; 85:8; 139:14; Matthew 13:16-17).
7. We teach the covenant child to write so that the exercise of writing will stimulate, cultivate, and refine the imagination, a function of the mind (Cf. Proverbs 21:5; 29:18; Joel 2:28; Isaiah 26:3; Acts 2:17-21; 11 Corinthians 2:16; 10:5; Colossians 3:23-24; I Timothy 3:17).
8. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may experience the delight of communicating a fresh insight into and about reality (Cf. Proverbs 15:23; 25:11; Matthew 13: 16-17; James 3:17).
9. We teach the covenant child to write so that he may be able to express the revelation of God in a stimulating and provocative mode (Cf. Psalm 150; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:14-17; 4:2-6).
10. We teach the covenant child to write so that he learns to share knowledge and insight, thereby fostering the nurture and growth of the body of Christ (Cf. Psalm 149:1; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:14-17).

**PRIMARY
PART I
COURSE OF STUDY**

PRIMARY COURSE OF STUDY
GRADES K - 3

- I. Kinds of writing
 - A. Creative writing
 - 1. Stories
 - a. True
 - b. Make-believe
 - 2. Poems
 - a. Rhymed
 - b. Free verse
 - 3. Songs
 - 4. Prayers
 - 5. Biographies
 - 6. Autobiographies
 - 7. Descriptions
 - 8. Reactions to stories
 - B. Expository writing
 - 1. Daily plans
 - 2. Directions
 - 3. Definitions
 - 4. Reports
 - 5. Biographies
 - 6. Autobiographies
 - C. Correspondence
 - 1. Friendly letters
 - 2. Business letters
 - 3. Invitations
 - 4. Announcements
- II. Writing skills
 - A. Organizational skills
 - 1. Paragraph
 - a. Recognition in reading (Grade 2) *
 - b. Indentation of the first line of story (Grade 2)
 - 2. Parts of a letter
 - a. Greeting (Grade 1)
 - b. Indentation of first line of the body (Grade 2)
 - c. Closing (Grade 1)
 - d. Placement of closing with comma (Grade 2)
 - e. Signature (Grade 1)
 - 3. Structure of a story
 - a. Unity as opposed to rambling (Grade K)

* *Nota Bene:* The grade designation behind the items in this outline denote when this particular item or idea should be introduced. Needless to say, if an item is introduced in Grade 2, that item or idea will be reviewed in Grade 3, etc.

- b. Beginning, middle, and end of a story (Grades 2-3)
- B. Sentence building skills
 - 1. Recognition (Grade 1)
 - 2. Kinds
 - a. Telling (Grade 1)
 - b. Asking (Grade 1)
- C. Mechanical skills
 - 1. Punctuation
 - a. Period
 - 1) After telling sentences (Grade 1)
 - 2) After abbreviations (awareness) (Grade 1)
 - 3) After initials (Grade 1)
 - b. Question mark (Grade 1)
 - c. Exclamation mark (Grade 2)
 - d. Comma
 - 1) After greeting of a friendly letter (Grade 2)
 - 2) After closing of a letter (Grade 2)
 - 3) Separating day of the month and year (Grade 1)
 - 4) Separating names of city and state (Grade 2)
 - e. Colon (awareness) (Grade 2)
 - f. Quotation marks
 - 1) Recognition (Grade 2)
 - 2) Usage (Grade 3)
 - g. Apostrophe
 - 1) Contractions (Grade 1)
 - 2) Possessives (awareness) (Grade 1)
 - 2. Capitalization
 - a. Names of all persons, first and last (K-Grade 1)
 - b. Names of pets (Grade 2)
 - c. Names of days of the week (Grade 2)
 - d. Names of months, holidays, and special days (Grade 1)
 - e. Names for the Bible and parts of the Bible (Grades 1-2)
 - f. Names of God and Christ (Grade 2)
 - g. Names of streets, cities, states (Grade 3)
 - h. Names of schools and churches (Grade 1)
 - i. Initials (Grade 2)
 - j. Abbreviations (Grade 3)
 - k. Mr. and Mrs. and Miss and other titles (Grade 2)
 - l. The word *I* (Grade 2)
 - m. The first word of sentence (Grade 2)
 - n. Greeting of a letter (first word) (Grade 1)
 - o. Closing of a letter (first word) (Grade 3)
 - p. First, last; and “important” words in titles of stories and poems (awareness) (Grade 2)
 - q. First word in a line of poetry (Grade 2)
- D. Vocabulary building skills

1. Rhyming words (Kindergarten)
2. Synonyms (Grade 2)
3. Antonyms (Grade 3)
4. Homonyms (Grade 3)
5. Heteronyms (awareness) (Grade 3)
6. Sense words
 - a. Words of seeing (Grade 2)
 - b. Words of hearing (Grade 2)
 - c. Words of touching (Grade 3)
 - d. Words of tasting (Grade 3)
 - e. Words of smelling (Grade 3)
7. Dictionary skills (Grade 1)

PRIMARY
PART II
IDEAS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING

IDEAS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

A. CREATIVE

1. Stories

a. True

Have the children write a response to an experience they have had. By posing leading questions, the teacher gets their reactions to the experience, cultivates an awareness of sensory impressions, and an awareness of details, and helps them to compare this experience with others they have had. The more intense the experience is for the writer, the better the writing will be.

Example of spontaneous writing in response to an intense experience:

- On November 22, 1963, President Kennedy was shot. The following Tuesday the children arrived with heavy hearts. They had closely watched the funeral that weekend. But what had affected them most was the sadness of the entire nation.
- As soon as the children came into the room, the teacher noticed that they lacked their usual bounce. Sensing that they were filled with an intense sadness, she decided that this would be a good time to get their feelings in writing. She said only a few words: “I feel as you do this morning. Let’s write about what happened this weekend.
- After writing, the children exchanged papers. They read each other’s stories for about ten minutes, then discussed the many ideas expressed: the sadness of the nation, of a family, and of a little girl named Caroline. Some wrote about their personal sadness. There was a good discussion about people’s emotions. Some wanted to write to Caroline: this they did in their spare time.

(N.U.C.S. Language Arts Curriculum Guide, p. 16, 17).

b. Make-Believe

This kind of writing is probably most natural and enjoyable for children in the primary grades, as most young children have very vivid imaginations and are usually eager to share their fantasies. There are many opportunities and occasions for this type of writing. The following are only a very few possibilities.

1. Invent circumstances

Pretend you are one of the firemen in your fire-fighting department. Pretend there is a fire near where you live. Tell what you do as you help to put out the fire.

2. Have the children write an ending to a story (Read by the teacher).

3. Suggest titles

Ideas for story titles can be kept on cards either in an alphabetical file or grouped by topics. Whenever pupils have difficulty thinking of something to write about they can draw inspiration from the box.

4. Work from a given beginning

- I was an acorn lying in the tall grass.
- I wish I could...
- It was the middle of the night and everyone in the house was asleep...
- I just can't open this door!

2. Poems

a. Rhymed

The teacher writes on chalkboard a nursery rhyme of a familiar poem with marked rhythm and reads rhyming word-combinations such as:

“Boy-gun
Heap-fun
Gun-bust
Boy-dust.”

After discussing “rhyme” with the class, the teacher coordinates ideas into a chart on the chalkboard.

After experimenting with rhythm as a class, have the children write their own rhymes—couplets or four line poems.

b. Free Verse

Many primary activities can serve as a basis for writing: pets, things made by the children in class, field trips, and simple aspects of nature can be subjected to observations and discussion. Then have the children write their thoughts and feelings toward them.

Examples:

(1) Cinquain—A Kind of Dwarf Poem

First line: one word, giving title
Second line: two words, describing title
Third line: three words, expressing an action
Fourth line: four words, expressing a feeling
Fifth line: one word, a synonym for the title

Deer
Sleek, graceful
Running and leaping
Happy to be free
Buck

(2) Instant simile

Divide the class into two teams. Have the members of one team think of abstract objects and the members of the other team think of concrete objects. Pair off the members of the opposite teams and have them write a poem that would begin with a comparison of the abstract with the concrete, such as:

Grace is like a car
Impatience is like a teeter-totter
Pride is like a swimming pool

3. Songs

4. Prayers

Have the children hand in statements about God such as: God is good; God is great; God is love; God made all things. Tell them which ones you plan to use in this prayer. This can be done about Christ, the Church, specific needs, and forgiveness of sins.

5. Biographies

Persons famous in Bible and in American history could be used for biographies. Young children may also enjoy writing a biography about a member of their family or a pet.

Example of a biography of Moses:

Moses was born in Egypt. His mother and father were Israelites. He had an older brother named Aaron. His older sister's name was Miriam. His mother hid him so he would not be killed. Pharaoh's daughter found him while she was bathing in the Nile River. When Moses was forty years old, he killed an Egyptian. When he was eighty, he led the Israelites through the wilderness for forty years. God took Moses to heaven.

6. Autobiographies

Many children often have difficulty in writing their own life. The following list could be used to guide them. They might choose an appropriate number of items to cover.

1. Did I tell whether or not I like my first name (or nickname)?
2. Have I included something about the people in my family that would let people know what they are like?
3. Did I tell about a pet, toy, or pastime that I have enjoyed very much?
4. Did I tell what I look like?
5. Can I tell some way in which I have changed in the last year or two, such as something I didn't used to like but do like now?
6. Do I want to tell what is the earliest thing I can remember?
7. Could I tell what I want to be when I grow up, and reasons for wanting this?

7. Descriptions

- a. Character sketches

The central idea of character sketching is to bring to mind a picture of the character. The picture does not have to be complete in all details and it is well to keep this in mind, as the children are encouraged to write only a few sentences that give a basic picture. Have them write about characters with which they are familiar. Some suggested topics are:

Our Bus Driver
Someone I'll Never Forget
Our Paper Boy
The Attendant at Our Gas Station

b. Describing an object

Following discussion about an object, one or more beginnings may be composed and written by the class or even an entire group story written. With experience, children can write stories independently merely from seeing and discussing an object. Lists of words related to the object and to the writing topic are most useful for spelling help and for inspiration. This list of objects may be used:

A pair of baby shoes
A shovel
A toy truck
A bird cage
A battered suitcase

c. Photographs, pictures, and the children's own drawings are also possibilities that can be used as the basis for descriptions.

8. Reactions to stories

After reading a story to the class, have the children write a story answering a specific question in which they would recall some part of the story and express their personal feelings toward the book.

Mauree Applegate in her book, *Freeing Children To Write*, has an excellent example of this type of writing, in which she tells of a teacher who read *Little Eddie* aloud to her second grade. Eddie was especially loved by the children because he did the mischief they only dreamed of doing. Sensing their interest, the teacher asked the children to write what they would do if Little Eddie were their brother. Here are two of the stories her children wrote:

If little Eddie was my brother I would be a wreck, but I would be happy. He would be a good pal. We could tell on each other. We would have a lot of fun.

If Eddie really were my brother I would take him to the park. We would ride our own bikes. We would go over to Maines Picnic Ponies and pay a quarter to ride them. Most of them are nice and gentle. We would play together. In the summer my sister would take us to the lake. In the winter we would put on warm clothes and make a snow fort. We'd go to the store for

mom. We'd play on the swing set. We'd do a lot of things together, if little Eddie were my brother.

B. EXPOSITORY WRITING

1. Daily Plans

At the beginning of the school day, the teacher discusses with the children the various activities that are to be undertaken during that particular day and the best order in which these goals are to be accomplished. She then writes these plans on the chalkboard or a large sheet of paper.

This may be used in planning a field trip.

This is a very good means to teach sequence, a very important but difficult concept for many children to learn.

2. Directions

If possible have the children walk to a place that is fairly near school. Upon returning to school, have them tell or write the directions to go to that place from school. The children could also draw a map showing the way.

Children can also write the directions for constructing a project they have made either as a class or personally, for baking, cooking, sewing, etc.

3. Definitions

There are many word games and exercises that teach children the meanings of words. As soon as possible, children should be taught:

- a. to write sentences when defining the word.
- b. that the word defined may not be used in writing its meaning.

In second and third grades, children could make their own personal dictionary that would help them learn the meaning of words, and also would be very useful as their own personal reference in spelling words when writing stories.

In first grade, the children could make picture dictionaries.

4. Reports

In early primary grades, reports are mainly descriptions of things experienced or observed. After class discussion, the teacher writes the report on the chalkboard and the children could also draw pictures of their reports. In teaching children to write individual reports, the children could all write a report on the same subject. This would enable the teacher to stress the twofold purpose of writing reports: organizing knowledge and expressing it imaginatively. Some topics on which reports could be written are:

- a. Weather
- b. Current Events
 - 1) World
 - 2) Community
 - 3) School
- c. Social Studies

- d. Science
- e. Class Trips

5. Biographies

The teacher could very easily combine biographical writing with children's independent reading reports. Most children become very interested in learning about the lives of famous people and read numerous biographies written on their level. After reading a particular biography, the children could write a report on the entire life of that person or elaborate on some important aspects in the life of that person.

6. Autobiographies

C. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Friendly Letters

Letter and note writing is an art by itself. It has immediacy; it is a dialogue with a person who isn't there. It must ask and it must answer; it must challenge and it must receive. Letter writing is a specialized kind of writing and therefore needs specialized training.

Some suggestions to help children write more interesting letters:

- a. Dress up simple little stories with feelings and thoughts.
- b. Teach children to keep their eyes open to interesting happenings.
- c. Help children to paint vivid word pictures of animals and people.
- d. Help children to write dramatic experiences of their own without overplaying their own roles.
- e. Encourage the children to choose a pen pal and help them in writing that first letter in which they attempt to establish a friendship with an unfamiliar person.

2. Business Letters

This form of writing may be used in connection with a social studies or science unit or in planning a class trip. The children may write a letter to a company asking for literature, an item, some specific information or permission to visit. Before writing a business letter, the teacher should stress the difference between the business and friendly letters.

3. Invitations

Have the children make their own invitation to a special occasion, such as, a program to be given by the class, an all-school function or their own birthday party. Encourage them to be original and imaginative in making their invitations, which must include naming the event., the place where it will be held, the date and time, and something which would make the receiver feel wanted.

4. Announcements

The teacher may display a few announcement posters with simple wording: and discuss with the class the communication importance of posters and announcement in our society The children would then write the words for a poster or new sheet type of announcement, being sure their announcement tells: (1) who and what (2) where and when (3) why and for whom.

Some suggestions for announcements are:

- a. The new supermarket
- b. Neighborhood park opening
- c. Social activity sponsored by the Mothers' Circle

Note to those teachers who are using Sullivan's Programmed Reading Series:

In the Teacher's Guide to Series Two and Series Three, Revised Edition, there are numerous suggestions and ideas for creative writing listed under "Supplementary Activities" at the end of each book in Series Two and at the end of each unit in Series Three. Although it is not necessary to assign all the activities to all the children, the teacher could permit each child to be responsible for completing one or more activities that he would enjoy doing.

The Revised Edition for Series One does not include any title suggestions. However, in the first edition, the teacher is advised to have the students write and illustrate stories from a list of titles. These titles are somewhat related to a story in their programmed reader. This activity forms an excellent means to stimulate children in early primary to begin independent writing and is one that children thoroughly enjoy.

This is the list of titles suggested in the first edition from which the children can choose to write and illustrate one or more stories. This activity should be assigned after the group or class has completed its work in that particular book.

Book 3

The Black Pig	A Big Kitten
The Tan Ant	The Stick and the Brick
The Red Bed Up the Hill	
Sam's Ship	The Bell that Rang
A Crack in the Glass	

Book 4

The Chicken Egg	The Witch
The Big Swing	Helen has a Bath
Sam's Bank	The Red Raft

Book 5

The Big Red Tent	Sitting on the Ladder
Ten Men on a Ship	Fixing Dinner
The Sad Pet	A Trip
The Plant in the Sand	Visiting Mister King
The Best Pitcher	Packing a Bag
Catching and Batting	The Last Cat
The Crab That Pinched	The Sick Fish
Six Shells on a Shelf	Sam Swims and Wins

Book 6

Visiting the Farm	My Pet
A Trip to the Market	In the Sky
My Sister	A Big Star
The Farmer	By Myself
The Red Barn	In the Park
A Pet Rabbit	The Lamb
A Black Car	Twins

Book 7

A Day in Spring
The Farmer's Haystack
A Picnic
My Wish
Ann Sells Fresh Peppers
Catching the Bus

What is the Sun?
Let's Play
The Day Nip Ran Away
Walter Stays in the Yard
Kit and the Ball of Yarn
Walking on the Path

A WORD ABOUT EXPERIENCE CHARTS

The use of experience charts is of prime importance throughout the primary grades as they form the basis of creative writing and for a time, they are the sole means of expression for the children. By using experience charts extensively in the prewriting period (Kindergarten-first semester of Grade One), children learn that composition is “talk written down” in an organized expression. Before a chart is made, the teacher draws from the children meaningful oral expression by guiding their thinking and helping them organize their thoughts. Only the main points of the discussion are written by the teacher on the chalkboard or large ruled paper and then read by the class. Dictation is usually done cooperatively by the whole group. As children learn vocabulary and writing skills, individual and independent writing gradually replaces group dictation and experience charts.

The teachers are urged to utilize experience charts whenever possible in teaching both creative and expository writing. The time and effort expended in making experience charts will produce very positive results—the children will be most eager and enthusiastic when the time comes for them to be able to write their very own stories and they will be able to better organize and express their thoughts imaginatively.

**PRIMARY
PART III
EVALUATION CHARTS**

TEACHER
PRIMARY EVALUATION CHART

1. Was this a good piece of writing for this child?
2. Is this writer developing a style of his own?
3. Is there a behavior clue in this writing that will help me to understand this child better? (One clue is not enough. Wait and gather.)
4. Does this story show improvement over the last one?
5. Has this writer experimented with any new words or ideas?
6. How well is this child choosing and using vocabulary?
7. Has the writer made use of the writing mechanics that he should know?
 - a. Sentences
 - b. Paragraphs
 - c. Spelling
 - d. Punctuation
 - e. Capitalization
 - f. Margin
 - g. Title
8. With what one or two points shall I help him in a conference?
 - a. Be positive. Encourage the child by pointing out the good qualities in his writing.
 - b. Remember that in the primary grades, *what* a child says is more important than *how* he says it.

STUDENT
PRIMARY EVALUATION CHART

1. Did I *indent* the *first line* of my story or paragraph?
2. Did I write a good *beginning* to my story?
3. Did I write a good *ending* to my story?
4. Did I use a *period* (.) at the end of my telling sentences?
5. Did I tell my story in the *right order*?
6. Did I use a *question mark* (?) at the end of each question?
7. Did I use *quotation marks* (“ ”) before and after the words spoken by a person?
8. Did I use the *apostrophe* (') correctly?
 - a. in contractions
 - b. to show ownership
9. Did I use *capital letters* correctly?
 - a. the first and last names of people
 - b. in the names of *pets*
 - c. in the names of the *days of the week*
 - d. in the names of *months, holidays, and special days*
 - e. in the names for the *Bible and parts of the Bible*
 - f. in the names of *God and Christ*
 - g. in the names of *streets, cities, and states*
 - h. in the names of *schools and churches*
 - i. in *initials*
 - j. in *abbreviations*
 - k. in the words *Mr. and Mrs. and Miss and other titles*
 - l. in the word *I*
 - m. in the *first word* of a *sentence*
 - n. in the *first, last, and important words* in *titles of stories and poems*
10. Friendly letters
 - a. Form
 - (1) Did I remember the *greeting*?
 - (2) Did I *indent* the *first line* of the body?
 - (3) Did I remember the *closing*?
 - (4) Did I *write my name* under the closing?
 - b. Did I use the *comma* (,) correctly?
 - (1) after the greeting
 - (2) after the closing
 - c. Did I use the capital letter correctly?
 - (1) in the *first word* of the *greeting*
 - (2) in the *first word* of the *closing*
11. Is my paper neat?

**INTERMEDIATE
PART I
COURSE OF STUDY**

INTERMEDIATE COURSE OF STUDY—GRADES 4-6

Intermediate writing skills are introduced in the fourth grade, reinforced in the fifth grade, and reviewed in the sixth grade. The exceptions to this are noted in the outline.

- I. Kinds of writing
 - A. Creative writing
 - 1. Poetry
 - 2. Narrative stories
 - 3. Descriptions
 - 4. Humorous writings
 - 5. Prayers
 - a. Praise
 - b. Thanks
 - c. Petition
 - 6. Dialogues
 - 7. Biographies
 - 8. Autobiographies
 - B. Expository
 - 1. Opinion writings
 - 2. Literary analyses
 - 3. Reports
 - a. Informative
 - b. Book
 - c. Sermon
 - d. Speech
 - 4. Definitions
 - a. Word to be defined
 - b. Class to which it belongs
 - c. Distinguishing features
 - C. Correspondence
 - 1. Social
 - 2. Business—know complete form by the end of the sixth grade
 - 3. Announcements and invitations
- II. Skills
 - A. Organizational skills
 - 1. Titles
 - 2. Paragraphs
 - a. Definition
 - b. Development
 - 1) Topic sentence
 - 2) Middle sentences
 - a) Logical development
 - b) Avoid irrelevant ideas
 - c) Sentence variety
 - 3) Conclusion

- c. Indentation
- 3. Story structures
 - a. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - b. Middle paragraph(s)
 - c. Conclusion
- 4. Outlining
 - a. 4th: Roman numerals, upper case letters (capital)
 - b. 5th: Add Hindu-Arabic numerals
 - c. 6th: Add details
- B. Sentence structure
 - 1. Recognize difference in language levels
 - a. Formal-avoid contractions
 - b. Informal
 - 2. Distinguish kinds of sentences
 - a. Declarative (telling)
 - b. Interrogative (asking)
 - c. Exclamatory (excitement)
 - d. Imperative (command)
 - 3. Avoid run-on sentences
 - 4. Use simple transitions
- C. Mechanics
 - 1. Sentence punctuation
 - a. End markings
 - b. Comma uses
 - 1) After yes and no
 - 2) In series
 - 3) In direct quotations
 - 4) In separating the last name from the first name when the last name is written first.
 - 5) To set off name of person addressed
 - 6) To set off appositional phrases
 - 7) 6th: After mild interjections
 - 8) In broken quotations
 - c. Quotations marks
 - 1) Continuous quotation
 - 2) 6th: Broken quotation
 - 2. Use of apostrophes
 - a. Singular possessives
 - b. Plural possessives
 - 3. Use of colon
 - a. Time
 - b. 5th: Introducing a list
 - c. 6th: In business letters
 - 4. Capitalization
 - a. Proper nouns
 - b. First word of direct quotations

- c. First word of each line of poetry
- d. Following strong interjections after exclamation points
- 5. Form
 - a. Legibility
 - b. Proper paper heading
 - c. Margin
 - d. Title
 - e. Indentation of paragraph
 - f. 6th: Simple bibliography
- D. Proofreading
- E. Terms to be learned—suggested list

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poetry 2. Narrative 3. Description 4. Dialogue 5. Biography 6. Autobiography 7. Opinion 8. Literary 9. Definition 10. Correspondence 11. Paragraph 12. Topic sentence 13. Conclusion 14. Introduction 15. Outlining 16. Logical 17. Detail 18. Formal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Informal 20. Declarative 21. Interrogative 22. Exclamatory 23. Imperative 24. Transition 25. Quotation 26. Interjection 27. Possessive 28. Contraction 29. Apposition 30. Communication 31. Phrase 32. Colon 33. Legible 34. Margin 35. Bibliography
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- F. Dictionary Skills

INTERMEDIATE
PART II
IDEAS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING

IDEAS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

At least one idea is presented for each element of the intermediate Writing Course of Study. Many additional ideas can be found in the recommended list of our bibliography.

1. **Poetry:** The essence of true poetry is not rhyme, as children almost invariably believe; rather, it is imagery. Two good books to read to the children in preparation are *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* and *Reflections on the Gift of a Watermelon Pickle*. To get the children to practice imagery, use the device called “Instant Simile”.^{*} Divide the class into two groups. Each individual in the first group is to think of an abstract quality; the second will think of a concrete noun. One member of Group A will state his word, the teacher adds “is like”, and one member of Group B concludes with his idea. Here are some examples that we did at the workshop.

Impatience is like a teeter-totter.
Sorrow is like a tower.
Fear is like a book.

To show ways in which the image can be carried through, the teacher may suggest different characteristics of both nouns, and then call for the children to carry through with others. Grades 4 and 5 might have trouble with abstractions; if so, two concrete nouns will work, too.

Here is a Subject Matter and Style Expectancy Outline for Grades 4, 5, and 6 from *Let Them Write Poetry* by N. Walters.

A. Subject Matter

1. Immediate experiences – 4
2. Remembered experiences – 4
3. Imagined experiences – 5, 6
4. Ideas about the natural world – 5, 6

B. Style

1. Narrative enhanced by picture words – 4
2. Simple analogies – 4
3. Little rhyme – 4
4. Occasional use of couplet and ballad stanza – 4
5. Falling off of narrative – 5, 6
6. Expansion of picture-making quality – 5, 6
7. Conscious use of analogy and imagery – 5, 6
8. Use of simple verse forms and some rhyme – 5, 6
9. Originality of thought and phrasing – 5, 6
10. Sincerity of feeling, but not depth of feeling – 5, 6

2. **Narrative Story:** This idea came from *Fun with Language Arts* by Margaret M. Holden. (See Bibliography)

^{*} Suggested by Dr. Stanley Wiersma, Calvin College

Begin with one paragraph of a story. Each day the story goes to another child who adds a new paragraph. If possible, do this exercise with a tape recorder and play back the finished story. It will produce many chuckles.

This idea can be used to give students a simple explanation of the element of conflict in all life. You can explain that every good story has it, even though it might not be planned that way.

Ask for titles that suggest something that moves in association with something that does not move.

1. The Wind and the Trees
2. The Skateboard and the Sidewalk
3. The Lawnmower and the Grass
4. The River and the Rocks

When students suggest titles, they may make errors in conception. The teacher's careful clarification will help them think through the idea as they write the story suggested by one of the titles written on the chalkboard.

This one is good for independent use of spare time. Have a folder full of pictures cut out of magazines or old books. Tell the children that when they are finished with their assigned work, they may come and find a picture that appeals to them. Then they are to write a story that the picture suggests. These stories can then be typed and pasted on a sheet of construction paper along with the picture that inspired it. Children are proud to see their stories posted on the bulletin board at Writers' Corner.

3. **Description:** Sensory appeal. To sharpen senses, take a common object such as an apple. Talk about apples—the orchards in the spring, harvest in the fall, the uses of the apple as a food. Each child has an apple. (There may be several different kinds). After each child has carefully examined his apple, he may write how the apple looks. Next have each child concentrate on feeling the apple. He may then cut the apple in half to expose more details of sight and pattern. If he cuts the apple crosswise, he will expose a star-shaped design. Having exposed the interior, an entirely different appearance is evident—color, texture, etc. There may be a rotten spot; the seeds are there. He next directs his attention to the sense of smell. Finally, he eats the apple and concentrates on the sense of taste.

There are any number of images that can be carried through in poetry, too.

4. **Humorous writing:**

- a. Poetry. Try a limerick. This is humorous or nonsense verse with an “a a b b a” rhyme scheme. Lines 3 and 4 are shorter than the other three.

“There was an Old Man with a Beard”

There was an old man with a beard
Who said, “It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen
Four Larks and a Wren
Have all built their nests in my beard.”

- b. Prose. Have each child chose a job or profession that he would like to pretend to have. Each one writes a letter to another member of the class. Or he may write in

composition form, telling about one incident or one day on the job. Encourage the children to choose an unusual job or profession such as a snake distributor, one who takes away the barking quality of dogs, a marble salesman, etc,

5. **Prayer:** Children's prayers soon become a repetition of phrases and clichés that the children have heard their elders use. The more familiar a person is with the Scriptures, the easier becomes the art of prayer. Take a specific verse from the Bible and show how one can build a prayer from it. Have a list of passages prepared which adapt themselves easily to a prayer. You can arbitrarily pick one verse for the whole class to work on, or you could have each pick his own from the list.

Here is an example. Dan. 9:19a. "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do." The first part is asking God to hear. This is the opportunity to debase self and to exalt the Lord, to praise His name. The second part calls for confession of sin, repentance, and plea for forgiveness because of Christ's work. Now that we have stated our case as to why he should hear us, we now have the right to ask for blessings.

There is a book called *The Prayers of the Bible*, compiled by Philip Watters, published by Baker, which can be a great help to anyone interested in improving the quality of prayer.

6. **Dialogue:** Using some of the same characters suggested under humorous prose writing, have the children write interview dialogues between salesmen and housewives, a veteran cowboy trying to sell a saddle to a greenhorn from the East, an auctioneer trying to sell a lame duck, a child trying to persuade a parent that he *needs* something that really isn't necessary at all. Try to get across the idea that in real life a person's character is revealed very much by what he says and how he says it.

7. **Autobiography:** In writing an autobiographical sketch, children should avoid the worn-out beginning, "I was born..." Encourage them to show how one's birth affected the household, or they could describe the setting—time of year, kind of day, time of day, etc. Encourage children at all times to think how they felt about something and to include this in their writings. With the fourth and fifth grades, often singling out something as "My First Day at Kindergarten" or "My First Swimming Lesson", works out better than a complete autobiography. In the sixth grade they should be able to do a lengthier composition with a broader time span.

8. **Biography:** Some interesting ideas can come from personifying an object or possession such as an old overcoat, hat, pair of shoes, brief case, a bicycle or automobile, a musical instrument such as a violin, organ, trumpet.

**INTERMEDIATE
PART III
EVALUATION CHARTS**

STUDENT INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION CHART

1. Did I use a good *title*?
2. Did I *paragraph* properly?
3. Did I use a good *topic sentence* in each paragraph?
4. Did I write my *ideas* in the right *order*?
5. Did I *avoid unnecessary* ideas?
6. Did I make use of proper *sentence variety*?
7. Did I *avoid* sentences that are too short and choppy or too long?
8. Did I write a good *ending* to each *paragraph*?
9. Did I *indent* properly?
10. Did I write a good *beginning* to my story or exposition?
11. Did I write a good *ending* to my story or exposition?
12. Did I *avoid* the use of *contractions* in *formal* writing?
13. Did I *avoid mixing informal* language when *formal* language should have been used?
14. Did I use proper *transitions*?
15. Did I use correct *ending punctuation* in each sentence?
16. Did I use the *comma* correctly?
 - a. After yes and no
 - b. In series
 - c. In setting off direct quotations
 - d. In separating the last name from the first name when the last name was written first.
 - e. In setting off names of persons addressed
 - f. In setting off appositive phrases
 - g. After mild interjections
17. Did I use *quotation marks* correctly?
18. Did I use the apostrophe correctly?
19. Did I use upper case *letters* correctly?
 - a. Proper nouns
 - b. First word of direct quotations
 - c. First word of each line of poetry
 - d. Following strong interjections after exclamation marks
20. Did I use the *colon* correctly?
21. Did I make use of good *form*?
22. Is my paper *legible*?
23. Is my paper *neat*?

TEACHER INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION CHART

1. Is this *good* writing for this child?
2. Is this child *competing* with himself?
3. Does this writing properly *develop* the idea?
4. Does this child make *use of comments* of previous papers?
5. Is this child *experimental* with new *ideas*?
6. Is this child *experimental* with new *words*?
7. Is this child *experimental* with new *forms*?
8. Has this child used good form in this paper?
9. Has this child made good use of *mechanics* in this paper?
10. Does this writing have an effective *beginning*?
11. Does this writing have credible *character development*?
12. Does this writing contain *appropriate conversation*?
13. Does this writing contain accurate and appropriate *description*?
14. Does this writing contain a clear and logical *sequence* of ideas or events?
15. Does this writing have an appropriate and effective *ending*?
16. Has this child made good use of his *imagination*?
17. Has this child made good use of rhythm with tone in his poetry?

RECOMMENDED LIST OF MATERIALS FOR TEACHING WRITING IN GRADES K-6

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- Platts, Mary E, Marguerite Rose, and Esther Shumaker. *Spice*. Stevensville, Michigan: Educational Service, Inc., 1960.
- Tiedt, Iris M. and Sidney W. Tiedt. *Contemporary English in the Elementary School*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.
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- Walter, Nina W. *Let Them Write Poetry*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962.

Williams, Charles W. *This is Poetry*, Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch, Publisher, 1964.
Wonsavage, Elaine P. et al. *Imagine and Write* (Books K-6). Columbus, Ohio: American Education Publications, 1970.

**JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PART I
COURSES OF STUDY**

JUNIOR HIGH COURSE OF STUDY GRADES 7-9

Seventh Grade

- I. Kinds of Writing
 - A. Short narrative
 - 1. Diary
 - 2. Autobiographical sketch
 - 3. Anecdote
 - 4. Incident
 - B. Description
 - 1. People
 - 2. Places
 - 3. Things
 - C. Friendly letters
 - D. Exposition
 - 1. Supporting an opinion
 - 2. Book report
 - 3. Explanation of a process
 - 4. Definition
 - 5. Report
 - E. Creative works
 - 1. Poetry
 - 2. Myth
 - 3. Fable
 - 4. Allegory
 - 5. Short Story
- II. Organizational skills
 - A. Narration
 - 1. Narrative arranged in chronological order
 - 2. Writing of dialogue
 - 3. Character description through narration
 - B. Description
 - 1. Spatial order
 - a. Top to bottom
 - b. Near to far
 - c. Inside to outside
 - d. Front to back
 - 2. Unity through creation of one dominant impression
 - 3. Primacy of the senses for effective descriptions
 - C. Friendly letters
 - 1. Personality of the writer in the letter
 - 2. Visualize the recipient
 - D. Exposition
 - 1. The one paragraph exposition
 - 2. The topic sentence
 - 3. Adequate logical development

- a. Detail
 - b. Example
 - 4. Outlining skills
 - 5. Unity by relating ideas to the topic sentence
- III. Syntactical skills
 - A. Sentence order
 - 1. Natural
 - 2. Inverted
 - B. Sentence variety
 - 1. Simple
 - 2. Compound
 - C. Sentence sense
 - 1. Fragments to be avoided
 - 2. Run-ons to be avoided
 - D. Agreement within the sentence
- IV. Diction and usage
 - A. Exact language
 - 1. Specific nouns
 - 2. Strong verbs
 - 3. Precise modifiers
 - B. Mastering the patterns of usage of standard English
 - C. Dictionary and Thesaurus skills to be taught
- V. Terms to be learned

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allegory anecdote autobiography compound sentence coordination description dialogue diary diction essay exposition fable fragment inverted order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mechanics myth narration natural order poetry prose run-on short story simple sentence syntax topic sentence unity wordiness (verbosity)
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Eighth Grade

- I. Kinds of writing
 - A. Exposition
 - 1. Persuasion
 - 2. Essay answers to questions
 - 3. Explain a process
 - B. Narration
 - 1. Real
 - 2. Imaginary
 - C. Description
 - 1. Person
 - 2. Place
 - 3. Thing
 - D. Social correspondence
 - 1. Formal
 - 2. Informal
 - E. Business correspondence
 - F. Creative works
 - 1. Poetry
 - 2. Dramatic monologue
 - 3. Short story
- II. Organizational skills
 - A. Exposition
 - 1. Understanding of the outline skills
 - 2. Topic limitation in exposition
 - 3. Formulation and development of a thesis statement
 - a. Detail
 - b. Example or illustration
 - c. Comparison or contrast
 - 4. Essay or multiple paragraph skills
 - a. Unity
 - b. Transition
 - c. Coherence
 - d. Introduction
 - e. Conclusion
 - 5. Climax development
 - a. Rising action
 - b. Falling action
 - c. Denouement
 - B. Narration
 - 1. Setting
 - 2. Mood
 - 3. Point of View
 - 4. Character
 - 5. Dialogue
 - 6. Conflict

- 7. Plot
- C. Description
 - 1. Emphasis of spatial order
 - a. Top to bottom
 - b. Near to far
 - c. Inside to outside
 - d. Front to back
 - 2. Unity to be maintained by creating one dominant impression
 - 3. Importance or primacy of the senses for effective description
- III. Syntactical skills
 - A. Skills taught in grade seven repeated
 - B. New syntactical skills
 - 1. The strength of the active voice
 - 2. Complex sentences and subordination
 - 3. Proper placement of modifiers
- IV. Diction and Usage
 - A. The need for exact language
 - B. The power of the action verb
 - C. The economy of words
 - D. Semantic variations
 - E. Dictionary and Thesaurus skills
- V. Terms to be learned

Terms of grade seven to be reviewed	
climax	point of view
complex sentence	rising action
coherence	semantics
conflict	setting
denouement	subordination
???? action	thesis statement
mood	transition
plot	

Ninth Grade

- I. Kinds of writing
 - A. Exposition
 - 1. Exposition based on literature
 - 2. Essay answers to questions
 - 3. Precise writing
 - 4. Reporting
 - 5. Writing the whole composition or essay
 - B. Narration
 - 1. Narration based on personal experience
 - 2. Narration based on vicarious experience
 - 3. Short story
 - 4. Anecdote
 - C. Description
 - 1. Learnings reinforced from grades seven and eight
 - 2. Description by narration
 - a. Monologue
 - b. Dialogue
 - c. Soliloquy
 - 3. Scientific and literary description
 - 4. Description in exposition
 - D. Creative works
 - 1. Blank verse
 - 2. Sonnet
 - 3. Short story
 - 4. Autobiography
 - 5. Informal essay
- II. Organizational skills
 - A. Exposition
 - 1. Paragraph skills
 - a. Recognizing topic sentences
 - b. Choosing relevant details
 - c. Writing effective opening sentences
 - d. Developing the topic sentence
 - 1) Stating the steps in a process
 - 2) Citing specific examples
 - 3) Pointing out similarities and differences
 - 4) Giving specific reasons
 - 5) Giving specific details of an incident
 - 6) Using fact and opinion
 - e. Arranging ideas within a paragraph
 - 1) Chronological order
 - 2) Spatial order
 - 3) Order of importance
 - 4) Order of difficulty

- f. Using connective tissue within the paragraph
 - g. Using concluding devices
 - 1) Repetition
 - 2) Summary
 - h. Condensing or compressing
 - 2. Short theme skills
 - a. Limiting the topic
 - b. Organizing the theme
 - 1) Introductory paragraph
 - 2) Development section
 - 3) Clinching paragraph
 - c. Using transitions between paragraphs
 - d. Establishing unity of effect, tone, and mood
 - B. Narration
 - 1. Point of view
 - a. First person
 - b. Third person
 - 1) Omniscient
 - 2) Observant
 - 2. Review of learnings of grade eight
 - C. Description
 - 1. Perspective
 - a. Stationary
 - b. Moving
 - 2. Review of learnings of grades seven and eight
- III. Syntactical skills
 - A. Skills taught in grades seven and eight
 - B. New syntactical skills
 - 1. Sentences that specify
 - 2. Proper subordination
 - a. Word or phrase modifiers
 - b. Appositives
 - c. Subordinate clauses
 - d. Restrictive and nonrestrictive modifiers
 - 3. Sentences linked with connectors
 - 4. Manipulation of sentence patterns
- IV. Diction and usage
 - A. Control of word meanings and emotional effect
 - B. Use of figurative language
 - 1. Metaphors
 - 2. Similes
 - 3. Personification
 - 4. Dictionary and Thesaurus skills
- V. Terms to be learned
 - Review of terms in grades seven and eight

blank verse
connotation
denotation
dialogue
effect
emphasis
figure of speech
metaphor
monologue
mood
nonrestrictive
objectivity

personification
perspective
persuasion
point of view
précis
simile
soliloquy
subjectivity
subordination
symbol
restrictive
tone
transition

SENIOR HIGH COURSE OF STUDY GRADES 10-12

- I. Kinds of writing
 - A. Exposition
 1. Essay answers to be retaught
 2. Analysis of character
 3. Book critique
 4. Analysis
 - a. Comparison and contrast
 - b. Cause and effect
 - c. Induction and deduction
 - d. Definition
 - e. Classification
 5. Research or term paper
 6. Explication of a poem
 7. Analogy
 - B. Creative
 1. Journal
 2. Short story
 3. Informal essay
 4. Poetry
 5. Creative letters
 6. Ironic essay
- II. Organizational skills
 - A. Exposition
 1. Paragraph skills reviewed
 - a. A concise thesis sentence
 - b. Developing the thesis
 - c. Arrangement of ideas
 - d. Introductory devices
 - e. Paragraph transitions
 - f. Emphasis to enforce meaning
 - g. Conclusion devices
 - 1) Summary
 - 2) Prediction
 - 3) Question
 2. Outline skills reviewed
 3. New skills
 - a. Value and danger of generalizations
 - b. Parallel structure
 - c. Subordinating less important ideas
 - d. Possible uses of illustrations
 - e. Balance and structure
 4. Book critique
 - a. Ability to come to a clear thesis
 - b. Ability to support the thesis with adequate evidence from the book

5. Term paper skills
 6. Argumentative skills
 - a. Cause and effect
 - b. Induction and deduction (syllogism, enthymeme)
 - c. Anticipating unvoiced arguments
 - d. Developing conciliatory attitude toward audience
 - e. Sense of climax, final appeal
 7. Development of a personal style
- B. Creative
1. Poetry
 - a. The impact of the concrete—the metaphor
 - b. Sensitivity to sound and melody
 - c. Relating the experience to a rhythmic form
 2. Short story
 - a. Creating background—setting
 - b. Describing character through what he says and does, and through others' words (show and not tell)
 - c. Sustaining the point of view
 - d. Seeing alternatives and their individual power
- III. Syntactical skills
- A. Sentence Variety
 1. Loose sentences
 2. Periodic sentence
 3. Sentence openings
 4. Sentence length
 5. Matching sentence types with ideas
 - B. Subordination
 1. Restrictive clauses
 2. Non-restrictive clauses
 3. Proper punctuation
 - C. Economy of expression
 - D. Sentence structure
 1. Sentence balance
 2. Parallel structure
- IV. Diction and usage
- A. Usage
 1. Mastering the patterns of standard English
 - a. Formal
 - b. Informal
 2. Awareness of sub-standard English
 - a. Dialect
 - b. Regionalisms
 - c. Obsolete forms
 - d. Slang
 - e. Illiterate forms
 - B. Diction

1. Appropriateness of diction to the occasion
2. Constant attention to vocabulary
3. Emphasis on specific nouns
4. Value of Anglo-Saxon forms

V. Terms to be learned

Review terms introduced in grades seven to nine

abstract	deductive	point of view
active voice	diction	premise
allusion	euphemism	redundant
anachronism	explication	relevant
analogy	enthymeme	research
analysis	ellipsis	syllogism
apposition	euphony	tautology
classification	hyperbole	thesis
cliché	inductive	triteness
climactic	jargon	understatement
concise	passive voice	
critique	plagiarism	

**JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PART II
IDEAS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING**

The members of the workshop found that *The Writing Program: Grades 7-12* was a most helpful book. Included here are some valuable ideas for the students as well as the teachers.

Assignment Tips

A good assignment should be thought-provoking. It should stimulate the writer to discover something new about himself or his world, with an emphasis on reflection and introspection as well as recall, and a gradual weeding out of merely emotional responses.

Help the student convert the assigned topic into a subject. A topic is the name of something: hobbies, bricklaying. A subject says something: hobbies are overrated, bricklaying requires skill. A subject then demands thinking and ideas rather than just a listing of facts. Have the writer ask himself, "What do I believe about this topic? What do I want to prove about it"?

A good assignment proceeds logically and naturally from a class experience: reading and discussion of literature; explanation and demonstration of skills to be practiced.

A good assignment is always specific; limited in form or content, or both; in the form of a concrete statement or proposition.

A good assignment will always stipulate the writer's audience.

Assignments ought to be of various kinds, but with concentrations on the kinds of writing found under each grade level in the Composition Sequence Chart.

SUGGESTION:

The teacher should periodically work out his own assignments. Such practice will help to sharpen the assignments he gives to students. Much hazy writing is the result of a foggy assignment.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE WRITING OF A SHORT STORY

A. A few pointers to students

1. Present the story through the eyes of any one of your characters as he saw it.
2. Don't tell your readers anything—*show* them through the words and actions of your characters.
3. Make your characters be true to themselves. Use their actions and words, not yours. Use dialogue wherever possible.
4. Determine the line of your plot and deliberately avoid including any incident, any word, which does not advance the plot. In general, try to introduce the problem, the setting, and the main characters within the first one hundred words. As the story progresses, three to five incidents should occur to complicate the situation until the climax is reached. At the climax the main character should make some big decision (or similar action) that leads to the rather rapid solving of the situation.

B. Essentials of the Short Story

1. Singleness of Impression

The story must leave at its close one dominant, well-defined sensation. This is called "totality of effect." Determine what tone you wish to strike, what effect you wish to produce.

Do not put into your story a single word, or action, or bit of description, or character, or anything, that does not in some direct or indirect way help to produce the effect you desire.

Do not omit anything that may help to bring about the same result.

2. Well-Defined Plot

The plot is the very foundation of the story — the working plan — the arrangement of the action of the story so that each incident shall be a necessary step in the progress towards the climax.

The plot should be so designed and adapted so as to produce the singleness of effect already mentioned. It is a means to an end. In structure it should be simple rather than complex.

It should be direct, forceful, and swift in its action, but never very elaborate.

3. Dominant Incident

The plot should revolve about a single, central, dominant incident, which in many cases will be the nucleus (in the mind of the author) from which the story originally developed.

All other incidents must be to develop the main or dominant incident. It is in this way that singleness or unity of effect will be achieved.

There should be a single big incident and the minor incidents and details are introduced solely to expand and accentuate this one.

4. Preeminent Character

The short story can be said to be a turning point in the life of a single character. The plot of a modern short story is concerned with one, or at most two, persons. If others are introduced, their parts are only tributary, serving to aid in the plot action of the chief actors. The true short story *concentrates* its interest instead of spreading it.

5. **Complication and Resolution**

There must be some difficulty or complication, and the interest of the story will lie in the outcome of this difficulty — how it all turns out.

C. **Points for Self-Criticism**

Is my plot clear, progressive, and natural?

Is the complication (main crisis) a real one, or does it seem artificial?

Is the outcome natural yet surprising?

Have I introduced any useless incidents?

Does the plot proceed without needless delays and roundabout digressions?

Are the chief characters brought out prominently?

Is the dialogue bright and natural?

Does the dialogue actually help to develop the story?

Are the opening and closing passages well suited to the style of story-telling I have selected?

Have I used any needless words?

Have I repeated any words when synonyms might better be used?

Are my sentences clear and grammatically correct?

Have I used a good variety of sentence forms?

Does each paragraph stand out as a little composition in itself, leading up to a climax of its own, and does it both naturally follow the preceding paragraph and prepare for the succeeding one?

Does the whole story drag at any point?

Does the story leave precisely the impression I designed that it should?

Is the story long enough to bring out the plot in a well-rounded manner?

Is the story short enough to make it compellingly interesting?

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING PARAGRAPH WRITING – GRADE 9

1. The paragraph is the main “idea unit” in most English prose. If a student can construct a good paragraph, he can write a satisfactory composition.
2. There are three basic rules for writing a paragraph that are applicable to all types of paragraphs.
 - a. Enough details must be included to make the subject clear or the point effective. The facts or details must be definite rather than vague, specific rather than general.
 - b. Sentences must follow each other in a natural logical order.
 - c. Only those statements which are relevant to the topic should be used. Any unnecessary details or any not bearing on the subject must be omitted.
3. The topic sentence announces the topic of the paragraph and awakens the reader’s interest. The student in the tenth grade should not be allowed to begin with sentences such as, “Now I’m going to tell you about...” or “My topic is...” He should begin with a statement which arouses interest and which starts with the subject directly.

Example: “My topic is about my vacation.” (student’s first sentence)
“My vacation was spent in the dark redwoods.” (rewritten)

Students should have practice recognizing and using topic sentences at the beginning, the end, and within the paragraph as well as paragraphs in which the topic is implied.

Some suggested exercises for teaching the topic sentence:

- a. Ditto paragraphs and ask students to find the topic sentence.
 - b. Write topic sentences on the board asking students to suggest sentences and to improve those which are generalizations. Ask students for sentences that show mood, point of view, interest, etc.
 - c. Ditto paragraphs with one or two sentences violating the unity. Ask students to find these sentences and discuss them in relation to the topic sentence.
 - d. Have students underline topic sentences in their own paragraphs.
4. The paragraph must have a good concluding (or “clinching”) sentence. This may be a vigorous concise restatement of the point of the paragraph or a summary of the points of the paragraph.
 5. Students should have experience recognizing and writing various kinds of paragraphs: narrative, descriptive, and expository. Special emphasis upon the latter should be begun at the tenth grade. Students have had many more experiences writing description and narration in earlier grades.
 - a. Narrative paragraphs may be developed by chronological presentation of details or by “flashback.”
 - b. Descriptive paragraphs are usually best developed by presenting details in space order when one wishes to give a factual description. When wishing to give a picture of the way in, which the writer was impressed by something he has seen, he may give details in the order in which they were seen.
 - c. Expository paragraphs may be developed in several ways:

By example or illustration — the writer may use one example fully discussed, or he may use several examples briefly told.

By comparison and/or contrast — the unfamiliar may be compared with something that is already familiar to the reader, or contrasted to the familiar. All points on one side may be balanced against all points on another or the comparison may be made one point at a time.

By cause and effect—this paragraph must begin with a statement, and then be backed up by reasons for this statement or the result of the statement.

By the addition of details—there is no certain rule for putting the details together. The best plan, however, is to build from the weakest point to the strongest. Four types of details are: examples, illustration, statistics, and reasons that will fix the item more firmly in the reader's mind.

By definition—the definition must include all objects bearing the name. It must exclude all objects not bearing the name. It cannot use the name of the thing being defined or any derivation of it.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR THE PARAGRAPH – GRADE 9

Most of the writing should be done in class.

Inspire students through discussion of their own experience and of the ideas and people found in literature. Whenever possible, choose a time of high interest in a subject to follow up with a writing assignment.

Stop often to look at good paragraphs in literature. Point out that good, clear writing is first an exercise in clear thinking.

Have students develop the topic sentence first, list the details, examples, etc., and then arrange them in the proper order before they write their paragraphs.

Teach and emphasize only one or two writing skills for each assignment (such as chronological order or concise descriptive words). Research indicates that one basic weakness in our procedure is that we try to teach too many skills at one time. Each skill taught, however, should be used in subsequent assignments.

A laboratory type of writing assignment in the classroom with the teacher helping the student is very productive. Students sometimes need help with choosing a subject and writing the topic sentence; they need help in determining the type of paragraph organization and method of development; and most of all they need encouragement and praise as they write.

Frequent writing assignments (a paragraph a week when possible) are better than long infrequent assignments.

Instruct students how to pre-correct their own papers either alone or with another student.

Careful correcting by the student after his paper is returned is of the utmost importance.

Read or duplicate good compositions so that the students can see the fulfilled assignment.

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Dr. Stanley Wiersma, professor of English at Calvin College, presented the following methods and ideas to us. He has used them in both college and high school creative writing courses, but with a little imagination and thought most teachers on any level can use them effectively.

1. The Basic Story Idea:

Almost every story ever written revolves around these five or six concepts: birth, the love triangle, an authority figure, death, and infinity. (Try this idea on children's stories such as "Little Red Riding Hood" or "The Three Little Pigs", and you will find that they too contain the same basic concepts.)

2. Descriptions with a Purpose:

Bring an object to class such as an old worn coat, a battered picture frame, or a crutch. Have the students write a story or poem in which this object plays an important part. They will not describe it merely for the sake of describing an object, but the description will be worked into the context of the story or poem.

3. Puzzle Story:

First day:

Read and discuss a story. Point out such things as: point of view, theme, setting, plot, and characterization. Then, plot the rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement on Freytag's pyramid.

Second day:

Bring a stranger to class and have the students interview him thoroughly. Next, take the class outside for a walk to pick up sense impressions. (Pick a setting that is different from the setting in the story read on the first day.)

Third day:

On this day the students piece the story together. They re-write the original story, only the stranger becomes the main character and the setting is the setting of the walk the previous day. Their puzzle stories become new stories.

4. Daily Journal:

This daily journal is not a diary; it should contain a person's internal and subjective reactions to the world around him. In many cases, it needs to be confessional. It is dialogue with one's self. It ought to be publishable. Writing a daily journal eliminates the terror of the blank sheet of paper.

5. Letters:

Letters ought to be written by real people to real people. They are not letters for conveying information, but are rather literary letters that have a central thought or idea running through them... These letters help liberate the "other person" that resides in everyone.

6. Instant Metaphor or Simile:

Divide the class into two groups including the teacher. Let the first group write the name of an abstraction on their papers such as love, peace, grace, hope, etc. Let the

second group write the name of a concrete object on their papers. Ask one person from the first group to read his. Let's say he says "grace". Then ask one person from the second group to read his. Let's say he says "swimming pool". The simile then is "Grace is like a swimming pool." The metaphor is "Grace is a swimming pool." The assignment for the next day is for the students to work out these similes and metaphors in any form they wish—story, haiku, sonnet, etc.

7. Mixed Media:

Bring a portable television and a portable radio to class. Set them in the front of the room. Turn on the television, but turn the volume off. Turn on the radio. Watch the pictures and listen to the radio simultaneously for about fifteen minutes. Turn both sets off, and discuss what was seen and heard.

8. Haiku via Floral Arrangement:

Haiku, form of Japanese poetry, and Japanese flower arranging are closely linked. Behind them both lies the whole Buddhist philosophy of heaven, the earth, and man. Call a local florist for his seconds from his flower arrangements. Put the flowers in tubs. Have the students pick out three flowers, one long slender one, one short stubby one, one curved one a little longer than the stubby one. The long slender one, placed at an angle, points to heaven. The curved one, placed at an angle on the other side, should droop toward the earth. The short stubby one, representing man, should be placed between them. The same is true in the writing of haiku, i.e., one line points to heaven, the next to man, and last to earth. Man is always caught between heaven and earth.

In his essay “Christ, Metaphor, and Appraising the Arts” Dr. Wiersma describes a five-step method based on the principle of choice for teaching students how to write short stories.

1. The elements of plot are explained: exposition, moment of inception, rising action, climax, falling action, catastrophe, and denouement. The student is assigned the task of fabricating three plots, each of them self-consistent. If the plots occur to a student complete with characters and setting, the plot must be abstracted from the other elements. The premature combination of plot, character, and setting may be a hollow reflection of TV formulae and not the product of personal choice. Of the three plots fabricated, one is chosen.

The student writes an expository theme in which he describes his three bare plots (referring to characters as A, B, and C to insure bareness of plot), indicates which he has chosen, and gives his reasons.

2. The chosen plot is now planned three times with completely different sets of characters. If the plot originally occurred to the student with a set of characters, he is welcome to make that original set of characters one of his options. Again, the set of characters that has the most possibility for expressing what the writer wants the story to say is the one chosen. Even if he chooses the set of characters that first occurred to him, he will now be choosing them rationally and freely.

The assigned theme in the second phase presents the protagonist from each of the three sets of characters, and again the student must make explicit the reasons for his choice of one.

3. Setting also can change a story. Poe’s “A Cask of Amontillado” would have a vastly different effect if it were not set in the catacombs, but in Poe’s Baltimore or in our Grand Rapids. The chosen combination of plot and characters is not provided with three contrasting settings. Then come the inevitable choice and the inevitable theme.

4. Point of view is a decisive factor in determining the shape of a story. If “Little Red Riding Hood” is told from the wolf’s point of view rather than from the omniscient-author point of view, the wolf must live to tell the story; if told from the grandmother’s point of view the story may well begin with the grandmother’s being locked in a closet. Numerous jokes and familiar stories are reworked from the point of view of point-of-view.

Jokes are especially good because the change in effect is so startling when the point of view changes. The farcical fat man who trips on a banana peel becomes a sympathetic character if he is allowed to tell his own story: his afflictions of glandular obesity and lumbago, his being misunderstood as pompous because of his stiff walk, and his hurt feelings at being the laughing stock. In short, no factor is so important in making any story what it is as point of view.

Again three points of view are provided for the combination of plot, character, and setting; one is chosen; a theme is written.

5. Then comes the phase of production. The plan for the story is based on the student’s own decisions; now he must make his metaphor. His completed story must be the successful substitution for—yea, the incarnation of—the complex and intangible personality that conceived it.

The climax of the creative process is always a reflection, however dim, of that moment when the Spirit brooded upon the water, and the chaos became cosmos, and behold, it was very good. No wonder that this phase of writing the story is almost unbearably exciting, even if the product turns out not to be very good.

For getting the first draft of a story I have used this method with college classes five times, enough to make some tentative conclusions about its effectiveness. I had better admit that occasionally I find a student who has read and written so much and has been taught so well that he does not need the “treatment” in order to be free; few of these, however, consider the treatment to be a useless impediment. It makes concrete to them what they had in fact learned to do. But the real triumph comes with the others. I can honestly say that none of the stories has been so bad that I could say no good about it. Inevitably, even the dullest student makes some choice somewhere in the process that reveals the self behind the dull facade.

Incidentally, the student’s critical insight grows enormously during the project. Stories read only for superficial entertainment otherwise, now become material for searching analysis of technique. What a story “says” as a whole becomes not only a matter of academic interest, but of greater appreciation. If the extended writing project were pursued only for the benefits to be gained in learning to read, the results would be worth it.

Of course, short story may not be the best form to assign in the grades, junior high, or even in high school. Few of my colleagues assign it in college composition. My plea is not that short-story writing be taught; my plea is that we give more thought to teaching the process of composition. To say, “Next week turn in a five-hundred-word theme” is a sure way to get the student to turn in what hollowly echoes what he has seen on TV or what we his elders have told him. No wonder he finds it so dull to do. And have you ever heard of a composition teacher who does not complain bitterly of his students’ work? It seems to me that the major reason student writing is so dull (both to write and correct) is that we teachers merely tell students to write, without teaching them how to be free enough to write. Processes of choice making—and not for subject alone—need to be outlined, it seems to me, for every kind of writing assigned.

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Here is just one of the several hundred ideas contained in *Ideas for Teaching English: Grades 7-8-9*. Of the 422 pages 172 pages contain ideas on the teaching of composition.

BRAINSTORMING A THEME IN ENGLISH I

Brainstorming is a short unit used for writing the first theme of the semester, the specific objectives of which are (a) to show the easiest way to assure unity, (b) to learn to develop a topic sentence, and (c) to provide a pattern for attacking future theme assignments.

The teacher begins by writing in large letters in the middle of the chalkboard a topic of general interest, such as Family or Teenagers. He asks class members to say whatever pops into their heads as they think of the topic selected. As answers begin to come, they are written on the board in a haphazard manner surrounding the main topic. The chalkboard looks something like that after a session of brainstorming:

marks	delinquency	brothers
driving	sports	sisters
curfew	popularity	records
telephoning		hot rods
dancing	TEENAGERS	food
parents		drive-ins
clothes		drinking
homes chores	going steady	parties
studying	money	dates

The next procedure is to make students aware that a short theme or a paragraph on the large topic would be so general that it would not say anything, that complete coverage would result in a book. Through carefully manipulated class discussion a chalkboard plan can be made for writing a paragraph:

1. Choose major topic:
2. Examine the major topic by writing the ideas that enter your mind as you think of the major topic.
3. Select one topic, or several related topics, from yours.
4. Eliminate all other ideas.
5. Introduce your theme or paragraph by writing one sentence which tells what you are going to write about.
6. Write — either immediately or after more thought — everything that comes into your mind on this topic.
7. Rest. Telephone a friend, take a shower, eat something, or shoot some baskets.
8. Read what you have written.
9. You may want to discard what you have written, tear it up, and start over.
10. Reread.
11. Revise.
12. Proofread.
13. Read aloud.
14. Recheck.
15. Copy. Write the theme in on theme paper, or type it.

In order to emphasize the step-by-step procedure and to help those who need time to learn to make and follow a definite plan, the teacher should probably allow two days to write the theme.

(C. K. Kochman, p. 107-108)

This is Poetry by Charles W. Williams is a small inexpensive paperback book that many of the workshop members found very useful in the teaching of poetry. Included here is the basic plan for you to evaluate and use if possible.

DO YOUR OWN UNIT

Let the students enjoy *This is Poetry*, particularly noticing the metaphors and similes. Compare selections from the book with Sandburg's "Fog" and "Night Stuff."

First Day:

Place paintings around the classroom—reprints of famous works or student art from art classes in your own school. Give your pupils free movement to go from one picture to another, but ask them in the process to choose one that they will describe.

Now say, "Let's make some metaphors and similes." Get them to write down what they see. What is the scene like? What is an object (within the scene) like? Is there a house? Are there people? Is there a tree? What do the colors and shapes remind you of? Are clouds like popcorn? Or buttermilk? Or animals?

Move about among the boys and girls, suggesting what they may describe. Occasionally go to the board and write down a fragment of your own description. *Anything*. Just let go, and don't worry about techniques of rhyme or rhythm. Get the words that come immediately. The key is to know what you're after. Lead, but don't steer. Appreciation must come before knowledge in all art.

Tell the class that sentences and punctuation don't matter in this—actually, phrases and fragments are easier and truer to natural expression. Discourage attempts at rhyme. The fact that they are *attempts* shows that the mechanical method is becoming more important than the feeling. Make every effort to get *something* from everyone, even if it's only a single comparison.

When the class period is about gone, ask students to put their papers in a Manila folder and leave them with you. Emphasize that you don't intend to read them, that these are not for grades. *Don't let students take their writing home with them*. Some will say that they want to do it over. Don't let 'em! The spontaneous honesty of feelings will be lost when they start to tamper. Explain that first impressions are wanted.

Second Day:

For the second day's work, have hi-fi albums of mood music ready. Any good variety of moods will do. Don't name them, and do avoid those with vocals. Music not familiar to listeners is best. Examples could be "The Submerged Cathedral" by deBussy and jazz numbers by Miles Davis, Charlie Mingus, Les Baxter.

Before playing the music, see that students have pencils and paper ready. Remind them that they don't have to describe the music itself, but that they are to jot down whatever impressions and pictures that come to their minds as they listen.

Again, try one or more of your own, this time on paper. Perhaps you can read yours to the class between the first and second records. If reaction is slow by many students, ask what scenes came to mind, and allow a brief discussion. The sharing of responses helps the more reluctant to "let go." Praise the efforts of any who want to read what they have written, but give constructive suggestions if artificial and forced words have been used.

When period is ending, have work placed in a new folder. Don't scold students who haven't done much. Say that a single line can be more exquisite than a whole page. It's *true*, you know.

Third Day:

Let's assume that it isn't raining, and that a second day of music reaction is not warranted. Begin field trips. Don't spend much time in walking. If there is a place near the school where pupils may sit under trees, let them scatter out within range of your supervision. Remind them that permission for outside class work depends on their behaving responsibly.

Call attention to colors of leaves (in the fall), the appearance of the sky. Move often from one group to another asking what they are describing. Get them to be aware of questions: What is the tree thinking? How would the sky feel to the touch? Where do I fit into Nature? Ask now and then if you may see what they have written. Show them what you have written.

Fourth and Fifth Days:

Weather permitting, continue the outdoor classes. Before going out on the fourth day, call attention to Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Millay's "Renascence." These were teen-age compositions. Note that all people, whether they admit it to others or not, have thoughts about death and fear and loneliness and many additional abstractions. You will be getting inner thoughts from some students by this time. Try some of your own. Is Death a sneaky little man with a stiletto, waiting to stab in the back?

Each day collect the writings in a new folder.

Culmination:

Let all pupils take back their own works of the week, and from them select the best they have done. Have them hand these in with their names on them. If you have students who can proofread for spelling mistakes, let them help get the material ready for mimeographing. Some parts may have to be cut for smoothness, but in no instance should the editing include rewriting or additions. Whatever is finally printed must be the pupils' own words. The committee of students might also help with line-breaking. Print enough copies for each member of the class, and be sure that authors' names are there.

Once the unit has been completed, relate all that you do in literature to it from that time forward. See the imagery of Thomas Wolfe in "Circus at Dawn," a prose writing rich in poetic appeal. Help to understand that their own tastes, their own real likes and dislikes, are valuable; that there is nothing wrong with them if they dislike a poem the teacher likes, and vice versa; that a poem may be studied for facts and meaning and vocabulary, but that this has little to do with appreciation. Let them discover that music or painting or poetry may be loved without knowing *why*.

If in the boy or the girl you can awaken a personal and positive feeling about poetry, it matters not whether you, the teacher, see the results in the same year. Prove to that child that his own feelings are important and that his own words can be worth reading, and you will enable him to read the worth in other writers. This Is Poetry—within himself, and forever real.

**JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PART III
EVALUATION CHARTS**

EVALUATION CHARTS FOR GRADES 7-12

Composition Rating Scale (Type I)

Assignment	Student	Date
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A. Content —

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Convincing (persuasive, sincere, enthusiastic, certain)	Unconvincing

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Organized (logical, planned, orderly, systematic)	Jumbled

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Thoughtful (reflective, perceptive, probing, inquiring)	Superficial

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Broad (comprehensive, complete, extensive range of data, inclusive)	Limited

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Specific (concrete, definite, detailed, exact)	Vague

B. Style —

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Fluent (expressive, colorful, descriptive, smooth)	Restricted

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Cultivated (varied, mature, appropriate)	Awkward

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Strong (effective, striking, forceful, idioms, fresh, stimulating)	Weak

C. Conventions —

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Correct Form (paragraphing, heading, punctuation, spelling)	Incorrect Form

<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
Conventional Grammar (sentence structure, agreement, references)	Sub-Standard

NAME _____ DATE _____ TEACHER _____

TITLE OF COMPOSITION _____ PERIOD _____

COMPOSITION EVALUATION (Type II)

	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
I. Composition			
A. Content			
1. Thoughtful content			
2. Clear understanding of assignment			
3. Selection of points related to the basic impression			
4. Adequate illustration to justify statements			
5. Evidence of careful...(viewing, rdng.)			
B. Organization			
1. An arresting opening			
2. Evidence of a plan			
3. Clear-cut continuity			
4. Adequate development of individual paragraphs			
5. Effective closing			
C. Presentation			
1. Title to indicate point (Purpose)			
2. Use of details and examples			
3. Style			
a. Well-chosen words			
b. Graphic phrases			
c. Economy of words			
4. Proper use of words			
5. Variety in sentence structure			
6. Facility of expression			
II. Technique			
A. Appearance			
1. Neatness			
2. Legibility			
B. Mechanics			
1. Proper grammatical usage			
2. Correct sentence structure			
3. Correct punctuation			
4. Correct spelling			
5. Correct paragraphing			

COMMENTS:

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RECOMMENDED LIST OF MATERIALS FOR TEACHING WRITING IN GRADES 7-12

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**A COLLECTION OF
ESSAYS ON WRITING**

MAN'S ABILITY TO WRITE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THE REFORMED CONFESSIONS

Distinctive and unique teaching of creative writing is a demanding but necessary art. An insight into the implications of the provocative phrase found in the concluding prayer of the Reformed form for the baptism of infants of believers is necessary for such teaching. The phrase petitioning God's assistance in the pious and religious education of covenant children suggests a profound motivation for all-inclusive covenant instruction.

This essay will correlate the Protestant Reformed doctrinal position concerning the image of God with the creative or imaginative writing attempted and accomplished by the student in the Christian school.

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The Scriptural and Confessional Doctrine Concerning the Image of God Compared With Divergent Views

The Mind of the Maker by Dorothy Sayers suggests her idea of the connection between the image of God in man and man's creativity. Miss Sayers says, "The characteristic common to God and to man is apparently the desire and the ability to make things." This artful but extra-confessional use of the "image of God concept" is the theory commonly held among the Christian scholars who have discussed this relationship. They want to enucleate man's creative and inventive ability by positing a cause and effect correspondence between man's being created in the image of God and his creative ability.

Nelle Vander Ark writes as follows in an introductory essay for the *Writing Program* of the National Union of Christian Schools:

Now as Christian teachers, we are quick to say, "Yes, that's right. Man is created in the image of God; therefore, he has a spirit. I can see, too, that language is an expression of man's spirit and must be used for God." But how far have we gone in our understanding of man as God's image-bearer? What does it really mean that man has a spirit? What powers does he have that are not animal, but God-like qualities? We must get beyond our pat definition of the image of God as consisting in "true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness" and beyond merely saying that because man has a spirit, he is a "moral, rational creature." These things are true, but for the teaching of language we need to be more explicit. Because man has a spirit and is created in God's likeness, he has the power to feel and to sense; to invent and to imagine, to act, to react, and to interact; to think and to give order to thoughts; to be free, to have command, to enjoy. These are precious gifts and powers. (Admittedly, they are perverted by sin, but we must not forget that they are also renewed by grace.) It is this surging spirit of man, with all its potential, that we must see as his uniqueness and as the dynamic or power-source of man's language. And we must see language as a characteristically human affair given to man to show what God is like.

Miss Sayers and Miss Vander Ark express anti-confessional ideas concerning the image of God. They express ideas that cannot be substantiated by the Word of God. The *Literature Studies Guide* published by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools, 1971, contains an essay that discusses the Scriptural, confessional; and historical development of the doctrine of the image of God. This essay states that the Scriptures, the Reformed Confessions, and John Calvin do not permit an interpretation which views the image of God in a broader or more comprehensive sense and in a narrower or more limited sense. To say that "We must get beyond our pat definition of the image of God as

consisting in ‘true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness’ ...” is to say that we need a more comprehensive definition and description of the image of God so that the creative and inventive acts of man can be understood and explained. To share this concern for a description and definition of the creative and inventive acts of man is not to share the concern for a more comprehensive and expansive understanding of the image of God in man. Man’s inventive acts can be enucleated apart from his being created in the image of God—an image he lost when he fell into sin.

It is the position of the Scriptures and the Reformed Confessions that there are in fallen man no remnants of the image of God apart from regeneration. Man who fell into sin lost the image of God and became the image-bearer of the Devil. To maintain that, man can bear the image of God in a broader sense suggests or denotes goodness—moral, ethical, spiritual integrity. This the Scriptures categorically deny. This is a denial of the truth of total depravity.

The Scriptures describe the spiritual qualities which were lost in the following passages:

And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24.

And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:... Colossians 3:10.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* teaches in question and answer eight that man is so corrupt that he is incapable of doing any good, and is inclined to all wickedness except he is regenerated by the Spirit of God. Eliphaz the Temanite, whose words are recorded in the book of Job says: “What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous,” (Job 15:14). Job must also answer the charge of Bildad the Shuhite, who says; “...how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4).

The Heidelberg Catechism also teaches that God’s creative hand did not produce the corruption on witnessed in the world. God did not create man so perverse, but God created man good, and after His own image, in true righteousness and holiness so that he might rightly know God his Creator. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 1647 A. D., Answer 1, adds: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

John Calvin, the systematizer of the Reformers, discusses the image of God in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Chapter XV, Paragraph IV.

Since, then, the image of God consists in the original excellency of the human nature, which shone forth in Adam before the fall, afterwards, however, is so corrupted and nearly wiped out that in the ruins there is nothing left than that which is confused, mutilated, and infected by filth...

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter VI, Part II, enunciates the results of man’s fall in the following words:

By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and *wholly defiled* in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

That man became spiritually and ethically corrupt is the only conclusion to which one can come. He did not lose the qualities that distinguish him from the brute creation. He remained a man with the rational soul that had been given him by God in creation. The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1647, states: “...He (God) created man, male and

female, with reasonable and immortal souls..." Man, however, became subject to bondage. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:15). Man was cursed, and the whole creation was cursed because of his sin. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who had subjected the same in hope." (Romans 8:20) Man lost those excellent, distinguishing, spiritual gifts that he had in the beginning when God saw all that he had made and said, "It is very good." Man lost those excellent gifts, which are principally restored to him only when he is regenerated by the Spirit of Christ. In Christ the redeemed man becomes a new creature. In Christ old things have passed away, and in Christ all things have become new. (Cf. II Corinthians 5:17) The only new thing in all creation is that which Christ has wrought by his suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and His Spirit poured out on the Day of Pentecost. "And all things are of God, who had reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." II Corinthians 5:18-19

Although the image of God must not be understood in the broader and the narrower sense, there is a proper distinction that must be made. The image of God must be understood in a *formal* and in a *material* sense. Man's nature is adapted to bear the image of God. In a purely formal sense man is capable of being an image bearer of God because he is a personal being with a moral, rational nature that is capable of righteousness and perfect holiness. Man always remains a moral, rational, personal being who *ought* to live in covenant fellowship with God, his Maker, but who has willfully assumed the image of the Devil and has rejected the image of God. This means that man is in reality morally corrupt. The thoughts of his heart are evil continually.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5.

And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth... Genesis 8:21.

The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things. Proverbs 15:28.

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man, For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man. Mark 7:20-23.

Man sins rationally and volitionally, and is therefore responsible for his actions.

That which man could have had he does not have. Originally man was endowed with spiritual, ethical virtues that characterize the image of God. These were his material possessions. He was created with all his affections directed toward God, but he lost the material possessions of original righteousness and assumed the material possessions of the Devil and became an instrument capable only of serving sin and all its passions.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Ephesians 2:1.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; Romans 3:10.

The being who was intended to be the crown and king of creation and who was designed to be the image-bearer of God became by his own willful act the image-bearer of the Devil. Only through the grace of God in Christ is this image restored in man. Paul says in Ephesians 4: 23-24:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Only those, therefore, who have been regenerated, have in principal those spiritual gifts which man originally possessed in perfection—*true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*.

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The Scriptural and Confessional Doctrine of the Image of God Applied to the Writing Program

How does all that has been written in this essay apply to the writing program of the Christian School? What valid conclusions can be drawn which will be scripturally accurate and confessionally sound concerning the writing that man does? What valid conclusions can be drawn concerning the writing the Christian teacher assigns in the Covenant Christian classroom?

It ought to be totally obvious that it is neither confessionally accurate nor scripturally correct to teach that, because of man's creation in the image of God, he is a "creative creature." in a certain sense it is even a contradiction in terms to speak of a creature who creates, but the discussion will not be prolonged by an argument concerning the merits or the legitimacy of the term "creative" as it is applied to man's innovative, imaginative, or cultural activities. The Scriptures and the Reformed Confessions emphasize, however, that man after the fall did not retain the image of God. That is absolutely true. Observe, however, that even though man lost the image of God, he did not lose his desire or his ability to produce things. His ability may have been greatly impaired because of the curse, (I believe it was!) but he did not *lose* the ability nor did he lose the desire to make things. Man's desire and his ability to discover, to make, and to produce things is rooted in his curiosity and his intellectual powers. Man did not lose his intellect, and, because he did not lose his intellect, he can be a productive creature. It is likewise evident that God had not annulled or abrogated the creation or cultural mandate.. Man, as the king of the creation of God, was still commanded to "subdue the earth and replenish it."

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Genesis 1:28.

Although God had not annulled the mandate to produce, he had made the task of man enormously difficult. His task on earth was now one that he pursued in the sweat of his brow because of the curse of God that came upon the whole creation—mankind and brute creation.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also

and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field, in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Genesis 3:17-19

That God had not abrogated or changed the creation mandate is also evident from the narrative in Genesis 4:19-24 which tells the tale of the cultural activities of the sons of Cain and Lamech: Jabal, the tent builder; Jubal, the musician; and Tubal Cain, the artificer and craftsman.

If the thesis is accepted that man's creativity proceeds from the image of God, which he has lost, then a man cannot be creative or innovative unless he is regenerated because it has been proved that it is scripturally correct to say that man has lost the image of God. This the Confessions also teach. Acceptance of the thesis that man's creativity proceeds from the image of God demands a position which says that only the regenerated man can be creative because only the regenerated man has the mind of Christ, i.e., the image of God.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. I Corinthians 2:16.

Likewise only he who is regenerated can be more and more conformed to the image of God. The Heidelberg Catechism, which is addressed to the Church of Christ, substantiates and interprets this truth as follows:

...that we constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we arrive at the perfection proposed to us, in a life to come. (Question and answer 115.)

It ought to be totally obvious, therefore, that creativity and inventiveness are not dependent upon man's being created or recreated in the image of God. That this is obvious is evident also from the fact that image-bearers of the Devil often have more imaginative ability than those who are renewed by the Spirit of Christ and are restored by God's grace according to the image of God. This imaginative ability they use, however, to their own destruction and write from a heart that hates God and all His precepts. That this is true is evident from the poem, of the ungodly Lamech, who exalts his exploits as follows:

Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice:
'For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me.'

Genesis 4:23, Revised Version, 1885.

The imaginative man, who ought to live in covenant fellowship with His Maker, lives as a covenant breaker. He uses his literary abilities to write imaginative works, which say many factually accurate and many beautifully phrased ideas that are discoverable in the events and the phenomena of this world, but they do not glorify the God of heaven and earth. These cultural products, which are true to the real situation and may be admirable works of art from a formal point of view, proceed from the fertile imagination that is stimulated and controlled by the unregenerate depraved heart. They are the products used and sometimes produced in the Christian classroom.

Man's ability to write imaginatively must be explained in terms of the remnants of natural light, and not in terms of the remaining aspects of the image of God, i.e., the image of God in the broader or more comprehensive sense. Man's literary ability must be

understood solely in terms of his creation as the highest and most gifted of God's creatures. Man had all the abilities that accompany the intellectual faculty of the soul. In spite of the fall, therefore, man remains a personal, moral, rational, responsible, thought-producing, and imaginative creature.

When man fell, however, the whole man fell into sin. A Gnostic dualism will not suffice in this instance. Man was affected in every part of his existence as a man. This means that man's imaginative function was also affected by sin. It is a notable and, somewhat disturbing fact that the Bible does not always use the term "imagination" therefore in a complimentary sense. Imagination is the term often used to describe the sinful notions of a man's mind or intellect. Such instances are:

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5.

...for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth... Genesis 8:21.

And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination (*stubbornness*) of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: Deuteronomy 29:19.

... neither shall they walk any more after the imagination (*stubbornness*) of their evil heart. Jeremiah 3:17.

But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear; but walked in the counsels and in the imagination (*stubbornness*) of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Jeremiah 7:24.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, (*reasoning*) and their foolish heart was darkened. Romans 1:21.

Casting down imaginations (*reasonings*) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; II Corinthians 10:5.

Although the term "imagination" is used in the uncomplimentary sense in the King James Version of the Scriptures, the Scriptures do permit a sanctified use of the term. David says:

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever, I Chronicles 28:9.

O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: I Chronicles 29:18.

Furthermore, the doctrinal statements concerning the image of God, man's soul, and man's heart enunciate the nature of the cultural products of man. If cultural products are an extension of the man, and if they are produced by men as a response to reality, they reflect the world and life view of a man. If works are produced by men who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Cf. Romans 1), it can be said that these works are directed away from God even though they may correctly represent an aspect of reality. These works are inclined away from God because they are part of the issues of life that come from the heart of one who is not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ. They have been produced by one who does not have the mind of Christ. He has not been restored to a new relationship

in Christ, and therefore, he cannot know the truth that shall make him free. If he speaks what his heart says, he will speak the lie, unless he is a hypocrite in his writings.

An important distinction must be made, however. Although the motive of the producer may be evil, the Christian may take that product and use it in the service of God. That which was originally produced by one who violently opposed the truth may be used by the covenant-keeper in the service of God. The Christian brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, (Cf. II Corinthians 10:5).

The doctrinal statements concerning the image of God also imply, but do not guarantee, the “Christianness” of works produced by men who have been renewed by the Spirit of Christ. Cultural products of men who are saved in Christ will have a theocentric inclination. The frustrating, self-denying, world-denying, Devil-denying process through which the Christian drives himself will be obvious in his product. He will have attempted to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ because he knows that in Christ are hid all the treasures or wisdom and knowledge. (Cf. Colossians 2:3). Such literature will be artful, imaginative, stimulating, and representative without being sentimental drivel.

The “Christianness” of works produced by the Christian is not necessarily guaranteed. Christian literature is not spontaneously generated and spawned from the mind and bowels of the Christian. Imperfect and sinful ideas exist in the works of Christians because the Christian in all of his activities has only a small beginning of the new obedience. The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1647, Chapter VI, Part V, enunciates this truth in the following cogent sentence:

This corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* likewise articulates the imperfection of man and his works in Lord’s Day 44.

But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these commandments? No: but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience; yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* also indicates the necessity of this kind of separated and sanctified living in Lord’s Day 24.

...for it is impossible that those, who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

All the works of the Christian, who is principally a new creature, are polluted with the sins of the old man, which he is called to mortify. The old man, which he is called to mortify, wars incessantly against the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am: Romans 7:23-24a.

The Christian is not yet in heaven. He writes in this creation. He can no way establish the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ in this life. He can only point the way to the city that hath been eternally founded on the finished work of Christ. That is something which “eye hath not seen, not ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart

of man”, (I Corinthians 2:9, Isaiah 64:4). The builder of that eternal city is the faithful, covenant-keeping Triune God—Father her, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Christian writer looks forward in hone, as he writes his metaphors of praise, to the time when the perfect poem will be sung—THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB. That will be culture true and complete. Let the Christian create in the hope of that day using all things as gifts he has received as a means to the final end and not as the end itself. Let the Christian serve the Creator and not the creature.

Put on therefore the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness so that with the whole heart, mind, soul, and strength a covenant-keeping, creative people may faithfully serve God in the writing which they do. Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

— Agatha Lubbers

VOCABULARY GROWTH

Our language is made up of symbols called words—spoken words, written words. They are the building blocks by which we formulate our ideas into language patterns. In the beginning everything was a word of God. The Bible speaks often about the importance of words. Two examples are:

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Proverbs 25:11.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14.

A word can make all the difference. To illustrate its importance Nila Banton Smith presents this paraphrased poem:

For want of a word, the phrase is lost.
For want of the phrase, the sentence is lost.
For want of the sentence, the paragraph is lost.
For want of the paragraph, the selection is lost.
All meaning is lost for want of a word.

Understanding and misunderstanding alike stem from the words we speak or write as we try to express ourselves, and there are times when an entire selection can be misinterpreted because a wrong meaning is given to one or two words.

Words are an integral part of any subject taught. Therefore it is essential in teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing to children to help them enlarge their vocabulary. Before a child comes to school, he has had wide and varied language experiences. His listening, and speaking vocabulary is considerable; he knows the power of words; and usually he has a keen interest in words. Very early a child realizes that words represent an idea, and his developing maturity will be measured by the increasing skill with which he uses words to communicate more and more complex ideas. Factual and accurate communication demands words that are exact and precise. The reading and writing vocabularies of a child are as important as his speaking and listening ones but are much harder to acquire at first. Later the reading vocabulary will outdistance the speaking and writing vocabularies. Effort should be made to transfer a child's speaking and reading vocabularies to his writing vocabulary. A teacher, who has found words to be fascinating, who enjoys learning and using new and intriguing words, will be more effective in stimulating the pupil to do the same.

A dictionary will prove to be the most helpful tool for vocabulary growth. Children should learn early to use the dictionary, and such training should continue throughout the school years. Word mastery is a lifetime task, but for the student in school it is crucial. A student who reads widely and thoughtfully has found the greatest single source of words to add to his own vocabulary, and will also gain an understanding of allusions — those words that have their roots in literary, historical, or Biblical references. Other factors that determine the character and size of a child's vocabulary are his environment, his capacity to learn, his interests, and the instruction and guidance he receives in home and in school in the use of words. An important method for promoting growth in a child's vocabulary is the enrichment of experience, both actual and vicarious. Because incidental teaching of new words is not as effective as direct teaching, an alert teacher finds and uses many helpful activities to insure vocabulary growth.

Nina W. Walter in *Let Them Write Poetry* says, “Our first task with respect to vocabulary building is to explore the everyday vocabulary of our students, asking ourselves such questions as these:”

1. Are they making use of as many words as they should for their age and grade?
2. What sort of words are they adding to their lists?
3. Are they exposed to good writing in their textbooks?
4. Are they encouraged to read books that use picturesque, imaginative, significant language?
5. Are they making consistent attempts to increase their vocabularies?
6. Have we awakened their interest in words?

Dawson and Zollinger suggest the following ways in which a teacher can direct attention to new words:

1. Take time to discuss unfamiliar words
2. Phrase questions in such a way that new words are called for in the child’s answer.
3. List key vocabulary on the chalkboard in summarizing main ideas in a situation.
4. Display pictures that will clarify and enrich the meaning of critical terms.
5. Provide activities that will require the use of new words as children plan, carry through, report on, and evaluate them.
6. Generally impress upon pupils the meaning and usefulness of new terms.

In a child’s present working vocabulary (as well as in that of adults) are many words and terms of which he has a faulty or partial understanding. Edgar Dale believes that we could probably increase our vocabulary ten per cent by bringing into sharp focus those words we only partially understand. He suggests this as one of the five ways to increase vocabulary in the teacher’s edition of *My Weekly Reader*. These five ways he sums up as follows:

First, we must realize that words are the names we attach to experience; we therefore provide the children with experiences.

A second way is to differentiate further those words we already know, to make more precise distinctions. This involves using synonyms and antonyms, and perhaps homonyms.

A third way to improve vocabulary is to discriminate the parts of words and learn to put them together in new combinations; to master the use of roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Fourth, school programs should concentrate on shifting the almost-known words into the well-known group.

The fifth and chief method for increasing vocabulary will be through reading and writing, speaking and listening, visualizing and observing. A person must become word-conscious.

Another valuable aspect of word study is the origin or history of words. This can be a lifetime interest for a person who is intrigued by words. Many books have been

written on the subject, and students, teachers, or any amateur philologist, whose love for words includes their etymology, will find them enjoyable and rewarding.

The following ideas for *VOCABULARY BUILDING* can be adapted for various grade levels. Many of them have been culled from the various sources listed in the “Recommended List of Materials for Teaching Writing in Grades K-6”.

IDEAS AND AID FOR VOCABULARY BUILDING

1. WORD FOLDERS (or WORD BOOKS)

These can be on individual or group basis. Covers should be attractive. Subjects for primary grades could include Animals, Family, Seasons, Toys, Weather. For intermediate grades categories or groups are more useful, such as Action Words (with stress on more precise ones), Descriptive Words (for color, size, emotion, etc.), Occupational Words, or Space Words.

2. PICTURE DICTIONARIES (for Primary grades)

The form can be a booklet or a wall chart. The pictures can be commercially prepared or collected by teacher or student. The subject field can be general or limited.

3. ALPHABETICAL CARD FILES

Each student should have his own file box or notebook. There can also be a group-prepared one. These should be checked often by the teacher.

4. WORD LISTS

Words can be written or printed attractively on charts or on bulletin boards. A display might be in the form of a beehive with bees bringing the words to the hive, or students can build a wall of word bricks.

Lists could be composed of words that are related to any particular subject or specific idea, that express a mood or impression, that deal with shades of color, that are pertinent to a special picture, or that make specific appeal to each or any of the five senses.

The following suggestion is limited to primary grades: Give children manuscript paper with pictures of fruit in one corner. Put words on the board to describe looks, feel, and taste. Children can write about fruit in as many sentences as they are able to do. Words such as yellow, round, smooth, rough, waxy, sweet, delicious, tangy, sour, spicy can be used.

5. SPECIFIC TERMS FOR GENERALIZATIONS

Make specific statements about ordinary phrases such as a big tree, a cloudy sky, a winter scene, or build up a basic sentence as "The snow was soft" or "Rain was falling" into "The snow fluffed up like feathers around my feet" and "Needles of rain stung my face".

For upper grades use a sentence similar to: **THE WIND BLEW HARD**. Divide paper into five columns. At top of second column write **WIND** and list as many names for **WIND** as possible. In the first column list adjectives to describe various kinds of wind. In the third column write **BLEW** and find other words to substitute for it. In the fourth column write **HARD** and find more specific words to list under it. In the fifth column write **SIMILES** using the word **LIKE**... Ask children to select what they like best from each column and compose one-sentence statements.

6. POETRY (a word bargain)

Read much poetry aloud to students, call attention to precise and specific words, to words that have emotional associations, to words that suggest or imply, and to words that set the mood.

Write poetry on subjects as nature, pets, people, sensory impressions, personal thoughts and feelings.

The Haiku, Tanka, or Cinquain demand an exact vocabulary but are not difficult to compose.

7. EXCERPTS FROM LITERATURE

Read selected passages in order to give children a feeling for picturesque speech. Have them answer "What kind of word or words did author use to describe this or that?"

(LITTLE HOUSE BOOKS by Laura T. Wilder are highly recommended.)

A corollary to this would be to have students make picturesque phrases to describe a picture or to describe a look, the way a pet plays, a tired person's look, or fear.

8. RELATIVE VALUES OF THE PARTS OF SPEECH

Verbs are the strongest because they give life and movement.

Nouns come next because they stand for ideas, names, and things.

Adverbs are next to nouns in importance; too many of them tend to weaken sentence and confuse image.

Adjectives follow adverbs; they are less important than nouns because they have fewer connotations.

Prepositions are important because, they show relationships or distinctions.

Connectives are relatively unimportant.

Children may work on sentence patterns at a young level if the teacher is clear in her instructions. In considering the sentence "A cat slept", pupils can indicate different modifying words which may tell about the cat (old Persian, alley), can supply various adverbs, and can give substitutions for the verb.

9. PICTURES AND QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DICTIONARY USE

A group of pictures is placed on the bulletin board to match each of these words: fez, pontoon, hogshead, quarry, mosque, safari, bovine, andirons, and bellows. Use pictures and dictionary to answer the following questions:

1. Which picture includes a fez? Who would wear one? What color is it usually?
2. What is obtained from a quarry? Use the word in a sentence as a verb.
3. Give a synonym for hogshead?
4. Which picture shows a bovine? A bellows? Andirons?
5. With what religion do you associate the mosque? Where is St. Sophia?

ETC.

10. CONNOTATION OF WORDS.

Connotation refers to feelings about words and the fact that although two words may actually be synonymous, our feelings about those words may make them seem to have different meanings or connotations.

Compare these word pairs: home-house, father-dad, fright-terror, enemy-foe

What are you doing if you are: philosophizing, reminiscing, reflecting, meditating, cogitating, musing, thinking, rationalizing, or daydreaming?

11. CHANGES IN WORD MEANINGS

The meanings of words change continually, and many of these changes suggest something beyond the dictionary definition or denotation of a word. These meanings with personal or group attachments (called connotation) are added to the core meaning of a word. Denotations are then modified by connotations, and in time the connotation may even become another denotation.

Some ways in which gradual changes take place are:

1. specialization—from general to restricted group
2. generalization—from restricted to general group
3. elevation of meaning
4. exaggeration or overstatement
5. understatement—vague or indirect word used
6. transfer—word now means a new object

Activities:

1. Find words that are examples of change
2. Find examples of exaggeration in ads
3. In what way have meaning of the following words become specialized—meat, liquor, stool, token, estate
4. How have meanings of these words become generalized—papera butcher, companion, manuscript, copy, chance
5. Has change in following words been toward degeneration or elevation? counterfeit, idiot, nimble, cruise

12. ETYMOLOGY OF WORDS

Advanced dictionaries and special books on word origins and word histories will be needed to complete these activities.

Discuss word histories and history in words for sputnik, blitzkrieg, boomerang, khaki, boycott

Look up the etymology of each of these words—abet, alarm, alert, alphabet, ambulance, assassin, auction, ballot, bonfire, bugle, escape, infant, journey, sinister, tantalize, thug, vandal.

From what language was each of the following words borrowed? algebra, boomerang, bronco, cotton, carnival, cashmere, freight, hurricane, lemon, patrol, plunder, ski, sugar, tycoon, zero

13. WORD GROUPS

Three natural groups of words that can be distinguished readily are those with common root meanings, those that are groups through prefixes and suffixes, and groups of synonyms.

Following are a few of the almost unlimited activities that can be carried out:

Add a different prefix (or suffix) to the same root word and have the student match the word with its meaning. (misplace, displace, replace or relay, delay, inlay)

Make sentences using a *pair* of antonyms in each one. (I would rather ride on a *smooth* road than on a *rough* one.)

Make sentences using synonym or an antonym pairs or synonym-antonym pair. Underline one of the pair and let the context give the clue to the other word.

(I cannot afford that luxury, because I do not have enough money for necessities).

Use a select list of words and have students give one synonym and one antonym for each. This could be an electrical quiz board matching game with synonyms first and then antonym-synonym matching. An interesting bulletin board display featuring a large scale is also effective. A card with the words is attached to the center pole. Matching synonyms and antonyms can be placed on side scales.

A picture with a definition and a request to “guess the word” will produce a wealth of synonyms. This could be limited to one particular word if several clues are given.

After studying prefixes, the following type of sentences would reinforce the meanings—

If you bought a trilogy, you would have ____ books.

A polygon is a geometric figure having ____ sides.

A monograph is an essay written about a ____ topic.

A megalopolis is a very ____ city.

A microcosm would be a ____ world.

In an oligarchy you would expect to be governed by ____ people.

Walk in solitude and you are walking ____.

And then there are these *GROUPS OF THINGS* by Ilo Orleans

A flock of sheep; a swarm of bees;

A tribe of Indians, a grove of trees;

A herd of cattle, a string of pearls;

A fleet of ships, a bevy of girls;

A litter of pups; a bundle of sticks;

A bunch of flowers, a pile of bricks;

A stack of books, a school of fishes;

A squad of soldiers, a set of dishes;

A pack of wolves, a line of cars;

A crowd of people, a cluster of stars.

14. MAKING MEANINGS MEANINGFUL

Looking up words in a dictionary and then using the words in a sentence does not make the student aware of the limitation of a dictionary definition. Students should

also realize that most words connote as well as denote, and the emotive nuances are also part of the word.

Dr. Howard Livingston suggests the following model and feels that the sentence will provide enough context so that a trip to the dictionary will be fruitful:

Prudent boys and girls do not run into the street without looking.

- A. Write the most appropriate dictionary definition for *prudent*, as used in the above sentence.
- B. Describe three examples of what you consider *prudent* behavior. Do not use the word *prudent* in your discussion.
- C. How would you feel if you were called *prudent*? Why?
- D. Write a sentence using *prudent* in another form, as an adverb.

15. ANALOGOUS RELATIONSHIPS

An analogy states a likeness, or correspondence, between things. Most intelligence and aptitude tests stress analogous relationships. Analogy is useful only if the terms are well chosen.

Some examples of word analogies are:

Pen is to scholar as brush is to squire, artist, miser
Earth is to mole as water is to nightingale, dormouse, fish
Red is to ruby as black is to bronze, taffeta, jet
Rind is to orange as shell is to cement, crevice, chestnut
Water is to liquid as iron is to building, solid, ship

Historical, geographical, and literary analogies are fun too:

Bull Run is to Civil War as Bunker Hill is to (American Revolution – War of 1812 – World War I)
Rocky Mountains are to North America as Himalayas are to (Europe – South America – Africa – Asia)
Treasure Island is to Robert L. Stevenson as Tom Sawyer is to (Meindert DeJong – Robert Frost – Mark Twain)

* Readers 's Digest has printed a small 24-page booklet on analogies called Family Fun with Words (1968)

16. POTPOURRI

“Brainstorming” or Thought Waves — take a few minutes on any day, announce a subject category or key word, and have the children write as many related words as they can. After selecting the most pertinent ones, the students can write sentences or preferably a simple paragraph with these words.

Word Hunt — using letters from one long word that contains at least four vowels, have students form as many new words as they are able. A time limit can be set or students may work on the list during their spare time.

Word of the Day (or Week) — students take turns in presenting a special word to be featured for the day or week. The other students look up its meaning, pronunciation, and make a sentence using the word. These things are written down and given to the

student who presented the word, who checks them for correctness. Everyone in the class makes every effort to use this word as much as possible.

Take Your Choice or Yes or No — compose questions using provocative words to be checked in the dictionary. The student may make a choice of one of two words given or answer yes or no.

Examples: Which would you rather be – a SPELUNKER Or a PHILATELIST?
Why? Is BULLION of any value? Yes or No

I'm Thinking of a Word — Teacher or student leader announces that he or she is thinking of a word that rhymes with “she”. Someone asks if it is something to drink, and the leader informs class that it is not “tea”. This continues until obvious question is asked so that leader can answer, “Yes, it is ‘tree’”.

Word Lists — provide many and varied word drills — try these:

words that begin and end with the same letter (deed)

words that contain double letters (vacuum)

words that contain three uses of the same letter (giggle)

alliterative words — teacher gives the key word and students give two alliterative adjectives for each (snake: slimy, slithery) (day: dark, dreary)

word triplets that are commonly used: (red, white, blue; stop, look, listen; healthy, wealthy, wise)

Word Scramble or Anagrams — give words and add one letter (or two letters) and have students arrange into one or more new words.

SOIL plus D (solid)

BLED plus U and O (double)

Acrostics — Give a key word and have students find an applicable adjective or noun for each letter.

W (white)

I (icy)

N (nippy)

T (tempestuous)

E (enchanting)

R (rugged)

- *In Other Words* Exercise books (Scott, Foresman and Co.) present many simple acrostics and crossword puzzles that are stimulating and valuable for word building.
- *Anchor* (A Handbook of Vocabulary Discovery Techniques for the Classroom Teacher), published by Educational Services, Inc., is the single most valuable book available on this subject.

— Winifred Koole

A POSITION ON THE TEACHING OF FORMAL GRAMMAR IN GRADES 4-6

The members of the Language Skills Workshop maintain that the teaching of formal grammar ought to be reserved until grade seven. By formal grammar we mean the systematic study of language that aims at a complete mastery of the inner characteristics of the language. Formal grammar is a scientific study that investigates all of the intricacies of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Traditionally the study of grammar formally has begun in the primary grades with repetition and further development in succeeding grades. We have no quarrel with the teaching of formal grammar as such. We do not agree with the increasing number of educators who would completely discard the teaching of formal grammar on the grounds that it has no relevance to the student's life. We wish to be staunchly traditional and maintain that there is something far bigger and vastly beyond the student that is the real object of our teaching, even our teaching of grammar. We insist, however, that grammar ought not to be taught as a formal discipline in grades four, five, and six.

The teaching of English in the schools of our country, and in our Protestant Reformed schools as well, has suffered greatly in the past as a result of confusion of goals and methods. All of the trouble seems to center in the question of what should be the content of language instruction. We have all been convinced that our students should by all means learn to write, but the fact remains that we have done very little as far as teaching them to write is concerned. The idea that a formal knowledge of grammar will automatically guarantee good writing is patently false, and the idea that a thorough mastery of the principles of grammar is necessary for good writing is only partly true. It ought to be a principle that every Protestant Reformed teacher accepts that the basic aim of the language program in the primary grades is to help the students learn to express themselves in writing. Then hopefully they will see that the business of writing and the business of learning grammar are really two separate and largely unrelated disciplines. The study of formal grammar is valuable because in language there is structure and order and design. There is beauty that reflects the wisdom and genius of the Great Designer. The study of grammar, however, is an exacting, exhausting study. It requires a good deal of concentration, a good deal of energy, and considerable ability to understand and to appreciate the abstract. The older the student the more likely he will be to master and appreciate the principles of the grammar of his language. One reason that students must be drilled year after year in grammar is that for most youngsters it is painfully difficult. It seems to be a wise move, practically, to postpone the teaching of grammar formally until the student has acquired the mental equipment necessary to make such a study meaningful and worthwhile.

If the teacher does not have to spend hours and days, even weeks; teaching all of the minute items of English grammar, she will have the freedom to initiate a writing program in which the emphasis is on how to use language rather than on what language looks like on paper. A solid writing program will involve teaching various writing skills specifically and will expose the students to as many kinds and forms of writing as possible. Naturally the students will have to have a working knowledge of some grammatical principles. It would be futile to try to teach writing without teaching what constitutes a good grammatical sentence. One cannot teach writing without talking about verbs and nouns, adjectives and adverbs. All of these things can and should be taught

incidentally, however, Grammar need only be taught when and where it relates directly to the process of writing.

What we are trying to say is that grammar is only one aspect of the English class at the primary level. It plays an important role, but really a subordinate one. Nothing should take up more time or be more important than writing. We teachers of English have to begin thinking of ourselves as teachers of writing. We have to make the concept of communication central in all of our thinking, planning, and teaching. If we do, maybe then our schools will begin to produce more outstanding writers. We have the richest language in the world. Our students have potential that we have only begun to tap. We have to make English a vital subject. A good deal depends upon it.

— James Huizinga

LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

The study of the history and development of the world's languages is a very broad field. Many men have spent their entire lives studying the history and development of only one language. Some have spent years on the study of only the dialects here in the United States and in Europe. Volumes have been written on the subject in several different languages. Some of these volumes take years to write and almost as long to read and comprehend. Dictionaries, word studies, and lexicons of every description line miles of library shelves. Although the field is broad and immense, we Christian teachers of history, language, and social studies in this day of skepticism, higher criticism and rampant apostasy have a duty and an obligation to teach our covenant youth the basic truth of this subject.

Most linguists and serious language students of today have propounded many theories about the origin and the historical development of the world's languages. Almost without exception their theories leave God out entirely. They base their theories on man's human nature, and, worst of all, they make a mockery of His Holy Word. One searches in vain for a truly Christian approach to this subject. Because there is this dearth of Christian materials on this subject, we must look to God's Word for some guiding principles.

In faith we begin with God—the speech of God. The Scriptures as we have them before us in our own language is the very speech of God. The Scriptures describe how the speech of God operates. First of all, God's speech, His words, create, i.e., they cause creatures to come into being. In Genesis 1:3 we read: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." The writer of Psalm 33 testifies that: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (verse 6). The writer to the Hebrews also bears record: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). Similar proof can be found in II Peter 3, Job 38-41, and Psalm 29.

Not only did God's speech, His voice, His word, create all things and cause them to come into being; but also all these creatures are and remain His words. In this way He reveals and manifests Himself to us His creatures.

The pinnacle of God's creation was the creation of man—Adam. He, too, was created as a word of God, but he had a unique creation. Man above all creatures was created to bear the image of his Creator. Adam could read and interpret all the other words in God's magnificent creation perfectly, exactly, and succinctly. Bearing the image of the Perfect One, he was perfect. When Adam named the animals, as recorded in Genesis 2:18-20, he was doing precisely that—reading God's Word in the creation. In this way Adam communicated with God, and God communicated with Adam; it was man's first communication, and beautiful it was. Then, came the Fall.

Adam's fall into sin changed all this perfect communication. After his fall into sin Adam could no longer communicate with God; he could not read His Word; he tried instead to hide from God. In the words of the Confession of Faith, man is described as follows: "And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he received from God..." (Article XIV). That man lost this perfect communication with God, that man lost this excellent gift to read and interpret the very words of God in creation, and that man is now a slave to sin are some

of the most fundamental principles in the study of any history of any language, because in the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, we read, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” (Romans 5:12).

Human language, as we know it, begins right here, but thanks be to God that in Jesus Christ it does not end here. We have Christ, the second Adam, our risen and ascended Lord who even now makes continual intercession for us so that through the guidance of His Spirit we can see more clearly and read more accurately God’s revelation in His creation and in His word in our own language, This is the focal point of all language study—historical, etymological, linguistical, or phonological. All language study focuses on Christ and serves to one end here on earth, the gathering of his elect to life eternal. And to meet this end Christ has given us means, all kinds of means, in which to study language and the history of language. He has given us dictionaries, lexicons, the works of the godly and ungodly, the studies and analyses of believers and unbelievers, but we must use them discreetly, and we must not become tainted by their vain philosophies.

Man sinned, God promised and gave a Savior, and Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden. They bore children, their generations grew, and the following generations became more wicked than the previous. The Lord sealed up in an ark eight souls, Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and all the living creatures male and female, and destroyed those who would not obey his voice.

Again the earth was peopled by the generations of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah’s sons. These generations were unified for we read in the Genesis account, “And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech” (Genesis 11:1). They sought to build a city and a tower on a plain in the land of Shinar. They wanted a unified world—a world with one language, one chief city, one tower “whose top may reach unto heaven”. But God came and confounded their language. Here is another principle of language study that is very important, God and God alone confounded the language. He causes and still does cause a language to change, flourish, or die. He is sovereign and omnipotent in this area also. Many today do not want anything of this idea because it puts God first and man second.

Since Babel man has tried desperately to heal this wound of the confusion of tongues. Throughout history men have tried to make the world speak one language. We observe three good examples as we read the superscription above the cross of Christ. The three languages used were Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Greek and Latin were, far a long time at least, the two major languages of the then known world. Greek began to fade as a major language as Rome became more and more powerful and influential. Latin was the major language for thousands if not millions of people up until the time of the Reformation. And even after the Reformation many, especially the scholars and intellectuals, used Latin as their second language. Hebrew, too, was a universal language of sorts, for the Jews of the dispersion still used Hebrew as their language of home and religion. But we know that many, if not most, Jews learned the language of the land in which they settled. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, three writers in captivity, spoke and wrote Aramaic, a language related to Hebrew but quite different. The wound has not been healed. Closely related to the above is one of the events that took place at Pentecost that

again proves that the Lord is the master of all things including language, for we read in Acts 2:5-11:

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout out men; out of every nation under heaven.

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers of Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers and of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

We may conclude from this that the Holy Spirit speaks to every man of God in his own particular language. Also, we may conclude that the Holy Spirit is not limited by language. How could he be when the Triune God caused this confusion in the first place? We may also conclude that God will see to it that every believer has his written word in his own language, too. That, however, is another subject, interesting though it may be.

As we approach the end of time we again see vain-glorious man attempt to make of this world one speech and one language. And we know, too, that far a time he will succeed, for in order for the man of sin to rule this world as one gigantic city, Babylon, he must have one language. The establishment of a United Nations is but one small step. Wait until the translators are out of work in the UN, then, it will be time for our Lord to come. Let us be watchful, pray, study, to prepare ourselves for that day when we shall see Him once again in heavenly perfection in the new heavens and the new earth.

— Darrel Huisken

**SAMPLES
OF
STUDENT
WRITING**

Several members of the workshop brought samples of students' writing. Some of the pieces were written last year; others are less recent. They are meant to be read, enjoyed, and used in your classrooms.

HAIKU

You are a person
In the spring so beautiful...
But messy at times.

Randy Feenstra — Grade 8

From the clouds above;
Fall upon the solid ground
Snowflakes soft and gone.

Linda Kuiper — Grade 8

The beautiful sky
As it glides over the earth,...
Soon fades into night.

Sandy Holstege — Grade 7

The crescent-shaped moon,
Makes a lovely umbrella
When you add a stick.

Sheryl Van Dyke — Grade 7

Slender white lilies
Gracefully sway in the breeze
Of a coming storm.

Lori Dykstra — Grade 7

As the sun comes up
It shines on dark fishing boats
Tied in the harbor.

Tammy Schipper — Grade 4

Dark and bleak winter
With cold storm winds blowing hard
When will it warm up?

Ronda Brower — Grade 4

Watch the busy ant
God in His Word so tells us,
We can learn from her.

Christine Holleman — Grade 4

Soaring high above
The graceful hawk hovers near...
Still puzzling nature.

Heidi Bomers — Grade 9

LIMERICKS

There was once a young maiden in haste,
Who stepped in a puddle up to her waist
It was such a disgrace
She turned red in the face,
For all noses of watchers turned up in distaste.

Ellen Hanko — Grade 8

There was a man named George
He was a blacksmith and worked in a forge.
While he was hammering one day,
His hammer slipped away.
Now he is a flatsmith named George.

Gordon Schipper — Grade 7

There was an old husband named Clyde,
And many a time he did hide.
His wife was named Esther
And was quite a pester,
So he was relieved when she died.

Sue Besselsen - Grade 7

OTHER POEMS

Dandelions

Bright little suns, shine in fields of green
Not war-like creatures as others have seen
But gorgeous blossoms full of peace
Unless they're trampled, cut off, thrown away...
...Bending heads slightly if a breeze comes their way
Innocent yellow, yet bold to appear
In everyone's garden, and showing no fear.
To the rich, to the poor, they give their glow
Only to be uprooted, discouraged, and mowed.

Ruth Westra - Grade 9

The Storm

Dark clouds quickly spread
The sun is blotted out,
The rain comes instead
A storm is all about.

Bright lightning flashes,
The rain comes down so fast,
Heavy thunder crashes,
The storm might soon be past.

But it isn't over yet,
More lightning, rain, and thunder,

The earth is soaking wet.
Will it clear, I wonder?
The dark clouds roll on,
Happy birds start singing;
Once again we see the sun,
And grass and flowers springing.

Tom Vander Woude — Grade 4

My Teacher

I have a teacher.
He is very nice.
He likes pets,
But he does not like mice.

Lori Ondersma — Grade 3

The Dentist Chair

Sitting in that dreadful chair,
I see my enemy everywhere.
The ugly Monster leaning over me
With many branches like a tree.
Then it begins to buzz and whine
Trying to make me lose my mind.
Meanwhile, I'm taking a rest
And wake up later, one tooth less.

Ed Veltman - Grade 9

The School Bus

The gigantic beast was loose on the street.
Its big yellow body was stopping to meet—
A curious boy who went inside
And was given a horrible ride.
The beast jumped a lot, disrupting its dinner—
Which was many more boys, getting thinner and thinner.
Its stomach was full, but it stopped to roar,
Which showed it was hungry and asking for more.
But the great yellow monster had too much to eat,
And out came its dinner all over the street.

Linda Vander Vennen - Grade 9

The Kite

What a wonderful day
In the month of May
I saw a kite
On a windy flight.

Jon Meulenberg — Grade 3

Ruined Plans

As the factory whistle blew,
Crowds of exhausted workers flew
To the door at the end of the stair
Where they knew they would find fresh air.
At the door they found a layer of snow
Which ruined their plans before they started to grow.

The Vacuum Cleaner

What is that awful monster?
It's really hard to say,
It growls and whines and glares at me
In a hostile sort of way.
Its hose-like neck, it stretches far
As it slinks across the floor.
Its nozzled jaws catch all the dirt,
But still it looks for more,
It creeps and crawls on tiny wheels,
Attached below its chest.
But when its long gray tail is pulled,
The monster's put to rest.
He's shut back up within his cage.
That's where I like him best.

Marcia Dempsey — Grade 9

Long Loneliness

Long loneliness
Dark and dusty
The trees are like ghosts.
Will the long loneliness never end?
No one will know till I get a friend.

Jeff Elzinga — Grade 5

Mountain on the Horizon

Just one mountain on the horizon,
Outlined sharply by the setting sun,
Points its bony finger to the sky,
To give all the praise to God on High.
Everlasting firm, it always stands—
A symbol that constantly commands
The men of all lands to bend the knee
With contrite hearts and humility.
Slowly as the purple sky grows dark,
It still stands, silently repeats, "Hark!"

Lois Hoeksema - Grade 9

Comparing

Christina Rossetti,
A great woman poet,
Writes better than I do.
And surely I know it.

With the horses of the land,
She compares those of the sea
But I cannot even
Compare her with me.

Lori Dykstra - Grade 7

Student Model
Poem using Metaphor

Untitled

The golden arrows dart now in, now out
And leave their voices in the rolling drums
Lest they be forgotten when
The steps of warriors weave thru
The ashes of the silenced fires.

Now silver javelins cut the stifling air,
But alas the booming of the drums
Seems but a futile call, for now
The warriors in their quickened pace
Are joined by the fury of a thousand horsemen.

Suddenly the tramping ceases
And the rumbling drums are silenced
The told gray ashes part to release
The splendor of the ultimately triumphant volcano.

Sue Terpstra — 10th Grade

Explanation by the poet

This is a description of a storm. The words following are used as metaphors:

1. golden arrows: lightning in small streaks
2. rolling drums: thunder (the echo)
3. warriors: first drops of rain
4. ashes: gray storm clouds
5. silenced fires: white clouds, symbolic of the white-hot fires
6. silver Javelins: great flashes of lightning
7. thousand horseman: increasing rain
8. volcano: the sun breaks forth in splendor, finally “defeating” the fury of the storm

This can also symbolize the following:

1. Fiery darts of the wicked
2. Their voices heard in the rumbling of the reprobate
3. The warriors vs. the truth
4. The ashes of the
5. Martyrs
6. Increase of the persecution
7. Joined by the “thousand” horsemen — more persecution
8. The “Sun of Righteousness” comes.

Student Model

Shakespearean or Elizabethan Sonnet

Sonnet #2: Winter Comes

The eerie, echoing wing-song of the geese
Spreads south across the cooling cloud-grey skies
To tell that winter's cold white hand shall seize
The helpless land and all that therein lies.
So, too, the ever-dying trees do print
The tale of their demise in glorious leaf
In many colors, each o'erlaid with tint
Of frost that winter etches in relief.
Then slowly varicolored leaves turn brown.
E'en that which makes them lively soon is gone;
Then laughing children cruelly crush them down.
The gripping hand of winter pities none.
E'en so the winters of our souls foretell
Their comings; milder, if we heed them well.

Dan Koerner — 12th grade

Student Model
The Writing of a poem

THE BIRTH OF A POEM

I wrote “Sonnet #2: “Winter Comes” about six weeks ago, I think. How did I get the idea for the poem, and how did I go about putting it down on paper?

The answer to the first question is quite simple. One afternoon I was delivering papers along my route, when I heard the calls of a flock of birds as they headed south. I don’t even know for sure that they headed south. I don’t even know for sure that they were geese. When I tried to express in words the sounds and the feeling that they gave me, I came up with the phrase “eerie, echoing wing-song.” This I set down in the form of the first line of a sonnet when I had returned home.

I then tried to continue the poem, but I didn’t get very far. Nothing seemed to fall into place. I couldn’t get anything down that sounded natural, and I didn’t know where I was going with the poem anyway. So, I put the paper upon which I had written the first line in my notebook. There it rested for several days.

Then, one study hall, I took out the paper again. I started trying various combinations of words to make the poem continue. Suddenly, the idea struck me that, really, all the eerie, echoing wing-song of the geese signified was the coming of winter. With that idea in mind, the poem seemed to form itself, practically. It was not a very big step from the sounds of the geese to the brightly colored leaves as the trees dropped them before the coming of winter. That idea carried the sonnet along until the last two lines.

These last two lines were the hardest to write. Traditionally, an Elizabethan sonnet must have a moral, something didactic, contained in the last two lines. I wanted somehow to apply the coming of winter to human problems. We, too, have “winters” in ourselves; times of despair or frustration, and we must be aware of them and counteract them. But, to get this whole idea into two lines of poetry is not an easy thing to do. After a lot of struggling, and juggling words around, I managed to get something down that made at least some sense. I don’t know for sure if the words got the intended idea across, but, anyway, they brought the poem to an end.

— Dan Koerner, 12th grade

Preface to poem based on Chaucer's *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*.

Writers of the Middle Ages borrowed freely from the works of other writers, incorporating structures of content or elements of style into their own works. To borrow from a contemporary writer or from a writer of another period was not to slight him, but to give him honor. In fact a writer was often judged by how well he could make an old story new. Geoffrey Chaucer was one Middle Age author who was a master borrower. The selection that follows was written by Marcia Dempsey when she was a twelfth grader at Covenant Christian High School. Chaucer would have been pleased with her product. In "South Holland Tales" she depicts a contemporary situation, imitating the language patterns and general writing style of Chaucer.

SOUTH HOLLAND TALES

When Autumn blows his mighty breath,
Upon the earth, and from the North,
Drifts the first lacy, frozen flake,
Then befalls the instructors to make,
In the name of learning, a pilgrimage.
Southward through many a country village,
'Til they reach with utmost rejoicing,
A town of full plentiful a distressing
Odor and there do converse of things,
Better for their students and more profiting.

There was full nine in a company,
Who in fellowship to their destiny,
Rode, led by a man of hair scant,
But in his middle part full abundant.
Well was he learned in most things
And fair was his voice when he would sing.
Thereto remarked they saying, "Right prettily
Could he follow a melody."
Loose and large was his attire,
And some bright colors he acquired.
He led with strong and confident hand
Through all the valleys of the land,
And should they ever disagree,
The one to settle it was he.

A gentlewoman there was, and on in years,
A kind and helpful heart was hers
To assist the leader was her position
And much skill in this she acquisitioned.
With silver threads her hair was made,
And on her nose spectacles she laid.
Upon a gentle mare she rode,
'Til they reached their abode.

A man was there, and that he
Was well schooled in all Biology
Was commonly known by all.
Every beast and creature held call
By its rightful scientific name,
And also the flora of the field, the same.
Well could he recite the laws of Chemistry,
In formulas there was none so learned as he.
Hair had he as yellow flax,
In this respect he did not lack.

With them a teacher of Deutsch would ride.
His dialect alone was right, and none beside,
And in this tongue could he converse politely.
On his head a tuft of hair stuck up slightly.
Well clothed he his body lean,
And of new ideas he liked to dream.
Of character was he strong and jolly,
To him, a hearty laugh was never folly.
He had a will of steel, but most often beyond reproach.
Because it helped him to be a wise basketball coach.
Admired was he by all his team,
Of state championships liked they to dream.

A woman scholar was there, wise,
And a speech on anything could she devise.
In Literature and Church History she taught.
And well informed was her every thought.
Also physically fit was she,
As any athlete could ever be.
Her short dark hair was curled loosely,
Neatness practiced she profusely,
Her lips, two, were colored like a rose,
And eyes have I never seen as those.
They could pierce right to the heart,
With fire or feeling tender to impart.
Her opinions oft would she share,
So that she caused many who did not, care.

A lady of Latin there also,
That would with them likewise go,
Well knew she the epic heroes,
Philosophers and tales of long ago.
Works of Aristotle, Plato, and Caesar
Translated she with full eager,
Anticipation. Her head was crowned,
With auburn locks. Many a gown
Had she of purple and gold,
And more lovely colors to behold.
Of countries for was she intelligent,
And had traveled in occident and orient.

An English teacher was there true,
That would of his students ensue,
Various themes and essays in correct,
Proper grammar. Fast could he detect
Any errors in spelling, form or punctuation,
So that his students oft felt sore degradation.
The sentence and paragraph could he dissect

Into diagrams, of both subject
And predicate was he informed.
And to no vain words would he conform.

A man there was, well acquainted with History,
Who long would discourse, 'til at an epitemy
Of sore anguish he would require
Of his silent students the same desire,
Which he felt to know the facts and figures,
Of kings and princes, dates and years.
Also was he well versed in government,
Political problems, and parliament.
Much time had he solemnly spent,
Studying many a yellowed document.
Now of what array he had,
Plain and simple was he clad.

A man of numbers rode at the end,
Who would much rather spend
His time devising and improvising
Upon various geometrical forms and theories,
So that he oft did not hear the inquiries,
Of his anxious companions eight,
Who wondered and marveled at his state
Of meditation and concentration.
Of swarthy complexion was he,
And it was a rare time if he be
Ever without his board of chess.
It seemed at nothing would he distress
The horse upon which he sat
Was full ferocious so that
Oftentimes it threw him off,
And he, not minding, got back up, still silent and aloft.

These nine be now a common sight,
And worthy travelers by their own right,
Twice a year their trek to make,
With diverse perils do undertake,
All for the cause which they believe,
With better methods to achieve.

— Marcia Dempsey, 12th grade

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