

# The Write Foundation

## Introduction

### Sentence to Paragraph, Paragraph and Essay Writing

Teaching the Writing Process and Structure

**Basic**

**STRUCTURED**

*Creative*

*Formal*

The goal of The Write Foundation is to teach students to become carefully planned, organized writers, enabling them to effectively communicate, preparing them for future classes and life.

All levels of The Write Foundation can easily be used in a homeschool setting with 1 – 3 students on a daily basis. The lessons can also be used in a co-op or classroom setting with multiple students taught once or twice a week and daily assignments completed at home on the other days.

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## General Teaching Principles

The Write Foundation gives you quality tools designed for you to use to teach your students how to write. You will have to take an active part in the process, with some intensive teaching. One mom said, "...the lessons are presented as simply as possible. The subject, however, is complex. Proper writing instruction is not quick and easy. It requires diligence from both the teacher and the student." TWF is arranged with detailed, specific guidelines, yet allows flexibility. If you will take the time to read through and follow these instructions, adapting them to fit you, then TWF will work effectively for you.

TWF was originally written for students who struggled with and hated writing. Hundreds of students who enjoy writing have also profited. Students learn the foundation for effective communication by organizing their work through the writing process, writing structure and proper, creative word usage.

### Objectives:

1. The Writing Process –fundamental writing skills of brainstorm, outline, rough draft, edit & final copy.
2. Writing Structure – incorporating structured organization in writing.
3. Word Usage – basic grammar and figures of speech used to enhance writing.

**Teach and then practice.** Whenever anything is to be learned, the basic skills must be taught first and then practiced. Early on, student attempts may be clumsy and even frustrating. The work will improve as they advance through the curriculum. Usually, excessive frustration comes from attempting more advanced skills without enough practice of the basics. The brain must repeatedly exercise anything to form a habit. Habits take time.

**“Repetition is the price of knowledge.” (Keith Lamb)** TWF is designed to equip students with effective writing tools, which are learned by repetition. Their job is not to understand why the repetition, but learn the process. **This is the shortcut!** What may seem like needless and sometimes painful repetition is actually a cornerstone for helping students build on their learning experiences. This makes learning easier, gives students success, builds their confidence, teaches them how to learn, and thereby keeps frustration and discouragement from hindering their development. Save their work. When looking back over their work, students will be able to see progress.

**Do not make the students repeatedly rewrite any paragraph unless rewriting is in the assignment.**

Keep in mind that the goal is to expand writing capabilities with a step-by-step teaching of the objectives. Repetition is written into the system. Don't overdo it, however. Instead, review the composition with the students, showing them how to correct their mistakes, and then move on to the next lesson. Verify that the mistake is corrected in the next lesson.

**Do not skip steps.** The curriculum is designed with each lesson building on the previous lessons, while adding new knowledge and skills. Every step created has a purpose in mind, so to skip a part would be to sell students short. The only exceptions are the brainstorm, outline and paragraph examples in the instruction manual and teacher presentations (TP). Not every example needs to be discussed in every lesson; use as many as needed to verify that students understand the point being taught.

**Assist as necessary,** but slow down or back up if a student is too frustrated. To lay a foundation, teaching is very intensive at the beginning of a level. Be patient, because students will gain independence as good writing habits are solidified. The teacher should help as much as needed until the student is comfortable working independently and starts chasing away the extra help. Make sure the student is well grounded in the basics and successfully working independently before backing off.

**Highlighting visually connects brainstorming, outlining and composing.** Color coding is used to teach the different parts of paragraph structure and grammar. Students use highlighting to organize their writing. They are learning to paint pictures with words. One mom said, “This has helped to cement the main concepts into their framework of thinking about writing.” Another mom said, “One thing I liked about this program is the way it used highlighting to break down the different parts of a paragraph. Students use specific colors to highlight sentences to identify topic sentences, supporting sentences, conclusions etc. This activity made these ideas VERY concrete and clear for my son. Seriously, it was like a light bulb went off! “Oh, so that’s what you mean when you say the sentence has to support the topic!” I found that by highlighting the sentences, he really began to think about whether or not a sentence made sense in the paragraph!”

Teachers need to stay focused:

- The student is learning a process.
- Perfection with each paper is not the goal.
- The primary goal is to go through the process over and over until good writing habits are established permanently.

### **Type Writing Assignments**

**Students should type the final copies of the independent work,** except specified poetry. If younger students need a teacher to type while they compose, that is fine for a while. If students do not know how to type, now is the time to learn. They will eventually learn to think faster than the teacher can write and will prefer to type their own work. But, that will come with time. When students are required to type their work, they learn a necessary life skill. Also, it raises their confidence, since they learn the satisfaction of proudly presenting their work.

## Recommended Age Levels

**Level 1: Sentence to Paragraph Writing Ages 11 – 13**

**Level 2: Paragraph Writing Ages 12 – 15**

**Level 3: Essay Writing Ages 14 – 17**

TWF is designed for students who need to learn the writing process and structure. Proper level placement is determined by student maturity, writing experience, and interest in writing. Students learn more when they work at their instructional level rather than their frustration level.

- If students hate writing, if it is a struggle to get them to follow directions, start them at the level where they are in the upper end of the suggested ages.
- If students love to write and are craving guidance to learn how to write better, then start them at the level where they are in the younger end of the suggested ages.
- Most boys are not ready in their physical development to seriously start learning to write until they are around 12 years old.

## Lesson Plan Suggestions

The Write Foundation curriculum was designed to make the teaching of writing simple, thorough and effective. The teacher will need to spend more time in preparation for the first couple of lessons, until the teaching system is learned. Preparation soon will become quick and easy.

### PLANNING THE YEAR

Each level contains 30 lessons, organized as 2 sets of 15 lessons. A set of 15 lessons may be taught in 1 semester or 1 school year, and thus lessons can vary from 1 to 2 weeks. The teacher needs to determine how ready the student is to write and how much time can be devoted to writing on a regular basis. When a student is working on the correct level, then the intensive teacher instruction will drop down as the year progresses.

- For some home situations, a 30 lessons-per-year format works fine.
- For most homes, a 15 lessons-per-year format works better. When students are taught at the lowest recommended age, plan on a slower pace. If students struggle, definitely plan on a slower pace. If extra time is needed, take it, because rushing the student results in frustration and aggravation for both teacher and student. If home life is hectic or students are tackling several subjects at the same time, plan on a slower pace of 15 lessons-per-year.

## PLANNING THE WEEK

Each lesson is organized into 3 major components: sentence structure, composition, and poetry instruction. Each component is divided into sections. In each lesson the 3 major components are organized in a recommended teaching order, but may be taught in whatever order best suits the teaching setting.

1. Sentence structure works on grammar while practicing and developing well-written informative sentences, building vocabulary, and using figures of speech. For the first 6 lessons in Sentence to Paragraph, this is the main part of each lesson.
2. Composition is the bulk of most lessons, with instructions on how to write paragraphs and essays.
3. Poetry instruction is fun and creative, but more importantly students work with grammar and figures of speech.

Teaching sessions may be organized in different ways.

- An entire lesson can be taught once, with independent work completed the other days.
- The lesson can be split over 2 days for teaching instruction with different sections of the lesson taught each day and students completing independent work over the other days. Suggestions are included in each level's introduction showing how to split into 2 days of teaching for different lessons.
- A lesson can be taught over a period of days, with different sections of the lesson taught each day for a short time, and independent work completed during the rest of the allotted time that day. Start at the beginning of a lesson and teach sections until certain ones are completed or the scheduled time runs out. The next day, begin at that point and continue.

One mom said, "... what we ended up doing was splitting up the "lesson" part over a few days, and assigning the homework (independent work) a bit as we went. Some lessons were easier to break up this way than others, but typically, we'd spend about 30 minutes of teaching time twice a week, and the other three days, (my son) would mostly work on his own for 30-45 minutes, usually getting five or so minutes from me in there somewhere." (Sentence to Paragraph)

## PLANNING THE DAY

Set goals each day for how much the student is to accomplish, and then adjust as needed. The amount of daily teaching time and independent work time will vary for different students.

- ❑ Sentence to Paragraph Writing will take an average of 30 – 60 minutes per day for instruction and independent work.
- ❑ Paragraph Writing will take an average of 1 – 2 hours per day for instruction and independent work.
- ❑ Essay Writing will take an average of 1 – 2 hours per day for instruction and independent work.

## GRADING

Grading is part of each lesson. The teacher should grade the final copy with the student, praising what is correct and showing how to correct mistakes. When students receive immediate, or as close to immediate as possible feedback, their work improves. The lesson is complete when the grading is complete. Specific grading instructions/suggestions are included in the Additional Resources for compositions and poetry.

### Daily Schedule Suggestions

Adapt the following schedule recommendations to fit you and your student.

#### 5 Day Schedule (fast pace) – 30 Lessons per Year

Recommended daily schedule for completing lessons weekly: about 15 – 30 minutes per day teaching instruction with a total of 1 – 2 hours per day including independent work

Day 1: Sentence Structure & Sentence Practice  
 Day 2: Teacher instructions for writing process  
 Day 3: Independent writing assignment  
 Day 4: Finish paragraph writing assignment – grade  
 Day 5: Poetry and Mind Bender® – grade

#### 10 Day Schedule – 15 Lessons per Year

Recommended daily schedule for completing 1 lesson in 2 weeks: about 10 – 30 minutes per day teaching instruction with a total of 30 – 90 minutes per day including independent work

Day 1: Mind Bender®  
 Day 2: Sentence Structure & Sentence Practice  
 Day 3: Teacher instructions for writing process  
 Day 4: Independent writing assignment  
 Day 5: Independent writing assignment  
 Day 6: Independent writing assignment  
 Day 7: Independent writing assignment – edit own work  
 Day 8: Complete writing – grade  
 Day 9: Poetry instruction – practice  
 Day 10: Poetry independent – grade

## Classroom/Co-op Setting

(Class time: 1 ½ to 2 hours)

The lesson plan format is where each lesson can be taught 1 or 2 sessions for each lesson, with 30 lessons taught in one year, or 1 or 2 sessions for each lesson every other week, for 15 lessons per year. The lessons can be easily divided and taught as 1 hour class sessions twice a week or up to 2 hours once a week. Time should be allotted for quickly reviewing independent work and Mind Benders®, teaching sentence structure, teaching the paragraph writing process and teaching poetry. The length of each lesson depends on the lesson and student interaction. Students complete the independent work assignments at home.

**Co-op Grading:** If the curriculum is being taught in a free or low cost co-op setting, divide the work among several participating moms. One mom can prepare and teach each lesson, another mom can grade all the poetry, and 2 or more moms grade the compositions, depending on the number of students in the class. The work would be fairly evenly divided if one mom is grading the compositions of 4 students for every lesson. Specific grading instructions/suggestions are included in the Additional Resources.

### How to Teach Lessons with a Computer or Overhead

The lessons are designed to be taught using the **instruction manual** with the **teacher presentation (TP)** pages on the computer or overhead, with the student(s) taking notes on the **worksheets (WS)**.

1. The **instruction manual** should be reviewed by the teacher before the lesson and used as reference during the lesson. Simply follow the **instruction manual** while displaying the **teacher presentation (TP) on the computer or overhead as a transparency**, as students write on the **worksheets (WS)**.
2. The **worksheets (WS)** are for student notes and independent work. All of the worksheets come in the order followed in the instructions. A **worksheet (WS)** is not needed for every **teacher presentation (TP)**. Some instruction and practice should be completed on notebook paper.
3. The **teacher presentation (TP)** coordinates with the **instruction manual** and the **worksheets (WS)**, showing information needed to complete the **worksheets (WS)**. All of the information on the **teacher presentation (TP)** is also included in the **instruction manual**. Students can view the **teacher presentation (TP)** on the computer or overhead while writing on their **worksheets (WS)**. Using the computer screen prohibits the ability to highlight or mark items, so the teacher may want to make paper copies of some of the **teacher presentation (TP)** pages to illustrate highlighting. Keep the pages in the teacher notebook for easy access.

Transparencies – online value pricing <http://www.terschproducts.com/>

## How to Teach Lessons without a Computer or Overhead

The lessons may be taught using the **instruction manual**, with or without the **teacher presentation (TP)** pages, and with students taking notes on the **worksheets (WS)**.

1. The **instruction manual** should be reviewed by the teacher before the lesson, and used as a reference during the lesson. Follow the **instruction manual** while the students write on the **worksheets (WS)**. A white board can be used for the teacher to write information on for students to copy onto the worksheets (fill in the blank – write just the words that go in the blanks).
2. The **worksheets (WS)** are for student notes and independent work. The worksheets come in the order followed in the instructions. A **worksheet (WS)** is not needed for every **teacher presentation (TP)**. Some instruction and practice should be completed on notebook paper.
3. The **teacher presentation (TP)** coordinates with the **instruction manual** and the **worksheets (WS)**, showing information needed to complete the **worksheets (WS)**. All of the information on the **teacher presentation (TP)** is also included in the **instruction manual**. If using this method, the **teacher presentation (TP)** can be printed on paper and used as a teaching tool to show examples, illustrate highlighting and serve as a visual aid. If the **TPs** are not printed, some information can be written on paper or a white board (fill in the blank – write just the words that go in the blanks) for the students to copy. The teacher may want to either make or purchase 3-hole punched paper copies of the **teacher presentation (TP)** pages and keep in her teacher notebook for easy access.

## Supplies and Student Notebook

### Students will need:

1. 3-ring binder (2 – 3 inch)
2. Worksheets (purchase from [www.thewritefoundation.org](http://www.thewritefoundation.org))
3. loose leaf notebook paper in the 3-ring binder
4. pens or pencils
5. 6+ highlighters (6 different colors)
6. 8 notebook divider tabs
7. thesaurus
8. dictionary

The following is a suggested way to organize notebooks. Feel free to organize student notebooks however best fits each student and teacher. The first 4 tabs are recommended for storing completed worksheets.

### **Organize Student Notebooks**

Put extra paper in the front of the notebook.

#### Label 8 Divider Tabs

1. Assignments
2. Checklists
3. Word Lists
4. Lesson Notes
5. Reading List (find in Additional Resources)
6. Graded Work
7. Worksheets – purchase from [www.thewritefoundation.org](http://www.thewritefoundation.org)
8. Mind Benders® – purchase from [www.criticalthinking.com](http://www.criticalthinking.com)

## **Teacher Notebook – Additional Resources**

**Additional Resources**, which were downloaded when purchasing the curriculum, can either be accessed on the computer or printed. Keep any printed pages organized in a teacher notebook.

- ◆ Assignments – These are divided into segments, but the order is only a suggestion. The assignment gives students guidance with the independent work.
- ◆ Checklists – Extra copies for the teacher to keep handy in case a checklist is lost.
- ◆ Grading Records – for the teacher who wants to keep records.
- ◆ Grading System – a suggested point system for those who need help in grading writing.
- ◆ Teacher Presentation (TP) – explained on pages 7 and 8. The teacher may purchase the pages on 3-hole punched paper when purchasing curriculum, or print the pages, either for making into overhead transparencies or using the paper pages to teach with, instead of using the digital version on the computer, which is provided in Additional Resources.
- ◆ Games – Have your students prepare prior to the lessons. Store in plastic bags and/or zipper pencil pouches.
- ◆ Miscellaneous Lists – Extra copies for the teacher to keep handy.

## Definition of Terms:

### 1. Teacher Presentation (TP): Additional Resources

The initials **TP** are used to indicate “**Teacher Presentation**” pages. **Teacher presentation (TP)** indicates pages from which students copy lesson information. Teacher presentation pages are included in digital format in Additional Resources for computer use and are available for purchase separately on 3-hole punch paper only when purchasing a complete curriculum package. Each level has about 250 Teacher Presentation pages. See pages 7 and 8 for more information.

### 2. Student Worksheets (WS)

The initials **WS** are used to indicate student worksheets. **Every student needs their own copy of each worksheet** kept in their notebook under tab #8 Worksheets, until needed for the current lesson. After worksheets are worked on in a lesson, file them under one of the following tabs.

1. **Assignments:** Assignments and worksheets needed to complete the assignment independent work, file under “**Assignment**” tab. When independent work is complete, turn in what is required, and empty the tab of other worksheets, but leave the future assignments until needed.
2. **Checklists:** The checklists, which includes highlighting instructions, checklists and the No List, file under the “**Checklists**” tab. Keep the current checklists and No List easiest to access.
3. **Word Lists:** Any word list already created or created together, file under the “**Word Lists**” tab. Word lists will be used in other lessons.
4. **Lesson Notes:** Worksheets used to take notes, outline formats, figures of speech, or practice sentences, file under the “**Lesson Notes**” tab. The figures of speech will be referred to in other lessons. The outline formats may be used for other courses. The other pages may be discarded after this course is complete.

### 3. Sentence Structure

Sentence Structure includes writing creative sentences, grammar practice and some punctuation practice while writing complete sentences. Sentence structure is applied to paragraphs.

### 4. Paragraph Organization Brainstorm

#### Sentence to Paragraph and Paragraph Writing

The Paragraph Organization’s purpose is to teach different methods of brainstorming. It is structured to teach organization skills. At first, some will not understand why they are required to do a separate brainstorm, followed by a similar formal outline, but this teaches how to form structure. The brainstorm is intentionally

parallel to the outline. This step-by-step process teaches how to brainstorm, outline and then write a paragraph, instead of just throwing thoughts down on paper, and then struggling with organizing them, hoping the composition will somehow come together. So, even if it seems simple and redundant, it works. Brainstorms can be brief, but stay within the lesson guidelines. When brainstorming, abbreviate thoughts or just write notes, and then later develop the notes as complete thoughts.

## 5. Essay Organization

### Paragraph Writing and Essay Writing

The Essay Organization is used primarily in **Essay Writing**. This separate brainstorm is still necessary, to generate the supports and thesis information. Students should determine their essay supports and thesis before they write their outline, rough draft and final essay, and record them on the Essay Organization. The supports may be brief notes, but the thesis should be a complete sentence on the Essay Organization.

## 6. Outlines

### Basic organization:

- Introduction: tell them what you are going to tell them
- Supports: tell them by explaining what you mean
- Conclusion: tell them what you told them.

Outlines are used to organize the brainstorm. The method is intentionally simple so students will learn the process. Complete the entire writing process each time. Do not skip the brainstorm or the outline. Outlines can be brief, but stay within the lesson guidelines. When outlining, abbreviate thoughts or just write notes and then later develop the notes as complete thoughts. Keep everything in order; do not write outlines until brainstorm is complete, and do not write paragraphs until outlines are complete. When steps are skipped, students do not learn the writing process, which eventually causes more frustration with longer papers and harder topics.

## 7. Examples

Examples are in the instruction manuals and on the **TPs**. Use the lesson brainstorm, outline and paragraph examples to show students work that follows that lesson's instructions. The teacher will either need to highlight printed **TP** examples or highlight the example in the **instruction manual** to use for illustration. Only let them copy the example when the instructions specify. Most brainstorm and outline examples are for the teacher to use as a guide when brainstorming and outlining with the students. **Not every example in each lesson needs to be used every time.** The examples should be used as necessary for clarification of the

assignment, which includes showing how required figures and parts of speech are included in writing. Poetry examples, which are usually on a worksheet and **TP**, are used in every lesson.

## 8. Checklists & Editing: Additional Resources

In **Sentence to Paragraph** and **Paragraph Writing**, the Writing Checklist, Paragraph Writing Checklist, the No List and assignment instructions are to be used for the student to edit, and then for the teacher to grade their work. These are introduced, added to as the year progresses, and periodically updated.

In **Essay Writing**, the No List, Essay Checklist and eventually the Condensed Essay Checklist, and assignment instructions are to be used for the student to edit, and then for the teacher to grade their work.

**Editing** begins whenever something needs to be changed or added at the rough draft stage. Before papers are complete, the teacher reviews the rough draft with the student, marking mistakes and adding necessary words. Read the paragraphs out loud to the student to help find missing words and other errors. Try not to kill enjoyment by being too critical. Find something to praise in their work.

**Grading:** If a teacher wants or needs to grade student work, checklists for grading are in the Additional Resources. Adjust suggested point values as needed. Grading checklists are only a tool to be used as guidelines and are not rigid rules. Praise students for what they do right while correcting mistakes. Do not repeatedly rewrite. Focus more on not repeating the same key mistakes in following lessons.

## 9. Assignments: Additional Resources

The assignments give student extra instructions for completing the independent work and reminders of independent work that is due. Each assignment is divided into **segments**, with Mind Benders®, poetry, and then the writing process for sentences, paragraphs or essay work. Students should complete each segment in an order specified by the teacher. Change the order of the segments to fit individual schedules.

## 10. Poetry

Poetry is taught for several reasons.

- It is used as a tool for teaching grammar, as the parts and figures of speech are used to create poetry.
- Having the students write poetry teaches how structure is used in writing.
- As students learn to work with different parts and figures of speech in their poetry, they will begin to incorporate these into their paragraphs.
- Students, to their surprise, find poetry to be highly enjoyable and rewarding. Poetry writing enables students to appreciate and use a variety of creative expressions in their writing.

## 11. Mind Benders®

Mind Benders® are optional, but highly recommended, because they help train students to think logically. The problems are designated by their page number in the Mind Bender® books and should be completed in order starting at the first of the book, because they progressively become harder. Students need to be working at their instructional level, not frustration level. Help them. If students are completely frustrated, back-up to an easier level. Be warned: most students absolutely love working Mind Benders®.

- **Sentence to Paragraph:** purchase Mind Bender® Book 3. Start at the beginning of Book 3 and work 1 Mind Bender per lesson throughout the year. You should end with about 5 problems not worked.
- **Paragraph Writing:** purchase Mind Bender® Book 4. If a student has never worked Mind Benders® before, purchase and use Book 3 first, and then work Book 4. If Book 3 was used in Sentence to Paragraph, then finish the last problems from Book 3 in the first few Paragraph Writing lessons, and then start at the beginning of Book 4 working 1 Mind Bender per lesson throughout the year. You should end with several (about 5 – 10) problems not worked.
- **Essay Writing:** purchase Mind Bender® Book 5. If a student has never worked Mind Benders® before, use Book 4 instead of attempting Book 5. If Book 4 was used in Paragraph Writing, then finish the last problems from Book 4 in the first few Essay Writing lessons, and then begin Book 5 working 1 Mind Bender per lesson throughout the year. About half way through Book 5 (~page 14) the problems become very challenging. Some enjoy the challenge, some quit. Use teacher discretion on if and when to complete the book.

Do not be fooled by the recommended grade levels on the Mind Bender® books. For many adults who have never worked Mind Benders® before, even the books recommended for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade can be challenging. Mind Benders® may be purchased from [www.criticalthinking.com](http://www.criticalthinking.com) or from some school supply stores.

## 12. Games: Additional Resources

Take advantage of the fun of playing educational games. Several games are scheduled for lessons during the year. The games can also be used whenever the teacher decides the students could use a break from the usual routine. Most games can be played more than once throughout the year. Games are provided for all 3 levels in **Additional Resources**. Prepare these games ahead. Have students prepare them. Store these in plastic bags and zipper pencil pouches in the teacher notebook.

Games may be played as individuals, partners, or teams. If there is just 1 student, either a sibling or the teacher could play too. An alternative is to have the student play against a timer or for rewards, such as a grape, sticker or another small item for every correct answer. Another alternative is to invite some friends over to play, which works especially well for lessons 15 and 30.