

# Level 4

*Second Edition*

# Student Text

by  
Matthew Stephens



**Essentials in Writing**  
Where Students Learn to Write

417-256-4191

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Printed in the United States of America

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SAMPLE

## LEVEL 4 SYLLABUS

### VIDEO – 80 LESSONS WORKBOOK – 222 PAGES

NOTE: Video lessons are indicated by ALL CAPS bold. Worksheets/assignment sheets are listed below each video lesson.

#### **LESSON 1: WHAT IS WRITING?**

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Writing

#### **LESSON 2: COMPLETE SUBJECTS AND PREDICATES**

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### **LESSON 41 – DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH**

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Lesson 41 Day 1 – Organize

Lesson 41 Day 1 – Draft

### **LESSON 42 – DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH**

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Lesson 42 Day 1 – Final Draft

Lesson 42 – Extra Practice

### **LESSON 43 – EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH**

Lesson 43 Day 1 – Brainstorm

Lesson 43 Day 1 – Organize

Lesson 43 Day 1 – Draft

### **LESSON 44 – EXPOSITORY PARAGRAPH**

Lesson 44 Day 1 – Revise

Lesson 44 Day 1 – Final Draft

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### **LESSON 45 – PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH**

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**LESSON 52 – WRITING A NEWS ARTICLE**

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Lesson 52 – Extra Practice

*\*Assessment 19 (Lessons 47-52)*

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Lesson 54 Day 1 – Brainstorm

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*\*Assessment 21 (Lesson 53-59)*

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*\*Assessment 22 (Lesson 60-64)*

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Lesson 68 Day 1 – Draft Body Paragraph #2

**LESSON 69 – EXPOSITORY ESSAY**

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**LESSON 70 – EXPOSITORY ESSAY**

Lesson 70 Day 1 – Revise Word Choice

**LESSON 71 – EXPOSITORY ESSAY**

Lesson 71 Day 1 – Revise Sentence Structure

**LESSON 72 – EXPOSITORY ESSAY**

Lesson 72 Day 1 – Final Draft

Lesson 72 – Extra Practice

*\*Assessment 23 (Lesson 65-72)*

**LESSON 73 – THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 73 Day 1 – Process

**LESSON 74 – THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 74 Day 1 – Brainstorm

**LESSON 75 – THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 75 Day 1-5 – Gather Information

**LESSON 76 – RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 76 Day 1-5 – Draft

**LESSON 77 – RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 77 Day 1 – Revise Word Choice and Sentence Structure

**LESSON 78 – RESEARCH PROJECT**

Lesson 78 Day 1 – Final Draft

**LESSON 79 – RESEARCH PROJECT**  
Lesson 79 Day 1 – Writing a Bibliography

**\*UNIT TWO COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT**  
(Lessons 38-72)

**FINAL LESSON**  
Comparing Compositions (2 pages)

SAMPLE

# CONTENT

## **Unit One: Grammar and Other Topics**

All lessons within this unit teach students how to *identify* and *apply* parts of speech. Content is divided into two sections:

- I. Parts of Speech
  - A. Identify Parts of Speech
  - B. Common Problems
- II. Tools for Effective Communication
  - A. Apply Parts of Speech
  - B. Apply Sentence Structure
  - C. Apply Figurative Language

## **Unit Two: Composition**

In this unit, students explore many different types of compositions, focusing on the parts of compositions, the writing process, and applying effective writing tools.

Students write *with* Mr. Stephens in a ***step-by-step/modeled*** approach to composition. During the video lessons, Mr. Stephens teaches students information and techniques and ***models*** how to perform each step of the writing process for individual compositions. Students apply what they learn from the video lesson and information presented in the textbook.

***Step-by-Step/Model:*** Through a step-by-step, repetitive process, students internalize the writing process and learn how to perform each step. Additionally, Mr. Stephens models the steps of each composition, showing students “how” to complete them.

***Immediate Application:*** By focusing on each step of the writing process through short, modeled lessons with immediate application, students apply what they learn immediately without becoming overwhelmed by other steps and/or forgetting previous steps. This method increases retention.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

A separate *Assessment/Resource Booklet* is available for purchase. The booklet contains:

- 25 assessments
- 2 comprehensive unit assessments
- Resource wordlist
- Additional organizers

## ACTIVITIES AND ICONS

In Unit One, students learn to identify and apply the parts of speech.



**Identify** activities help students learn to identify parts of speech in written language.



**Apply** activities help students identify and apply parts of speech that are tools to aid in effectively communicating with written language. This provides students with tools they will use when writing in Unit Two.

Progression of identify and apply activities within each practice session:

1. Students *identify* parts of speech in sentences.
2. Students *apply* what they have learned through fill-in-the-blank activities.
3. Students *identify* parts of speech in written compositions.
4. Students *apply* what they have learned through fill-in-the-blank, writing sentences, and/or written composition activities.



**Grammar Section Toolbox** – In Unit One, the toolbox will be present on all “apply” activities. The toolbox serves as a reminder to students that the skills practiced on the page are tools to help them communicate effectively in writing. In Unit Two, the toolbox reminds students when revising compositions to use their writing “tools” to improve communication.

**The Writing Process** – The icons remind students which step of the writing process they are completing.



BRAINSTORM



ORGANIZE



DRAFT



REVISE



PUBLISH



**Extra Practice** – After all steps of each composition have been complete, and parents or teachers have completed the checklist, students have the opportunity to practice writing another composition of the same type. They read the prompt on the “Extra Practice” page, and, just as before, watch each video lesson before completing each step of the writing process for the new composition. When organizing thoughts, students may draw graphic organizers on notebook paper or use additional organizers provided in the *Assessment/Resource Booklet*.



**Resource Folder** – In Lesson 25, students are asked to begin creating a “Discarded Word List” and place it in a resource folder. In Unit 2, students are asked to update the word list after each composition. This serves to build a resource file that is helpful for effective communication in the coming lessons and years.

# SCORING COMPOSITIONS

Scoring written compositions can be challenging due to their subjective nature. Ultimately, I encourage you to do what works for you, your student, and/or your schooling situation. If you already use a method to score written compositions, stick with it. Along the way, try new methods.

If you use the checklists provided, focus primarily on completion and conversation. Use the checklist as a guide to discuss how effective or ineffective the composition is as a whole and strengths and weaknesses evident in the composition.

*Scoring services are available for purchase for levels 9-12. Running from August 1 to May 15 each school year, a certified member of our curriculum department will score written compositions for any or all assignments presented in each level purchased. Visit our website for more information.*

There are several different ways to utilize the checklist and hold discussions:

**1. Student completes the checklist before turning in the assignment.** The teacher spot-checks a few items and asks the student to point to different items on the checklist evident in the composition and explain why the item was checked.

*Teacher: "I see you marked that your narrative contains transitions. Show me your transitions." - Student points to the transitions.*

**2. Teacher checks each item and assigns a grade.** This works well when time is limited. Assign a letter grade based the overall composition using the sample composition provided in the key as a guide. Discuss one or more areas that may or may not include suggestions or requested revision.

After completing the checklist, the teacher might say and ask something like:  
*"I noticed that your hook for your opening paragraph of the expository essay is weak. I think it is weak because you didn't grab my attention. What do you think you could add or change that might help grab my attention?"*

**3. Assign a completion grade.** Use the checklist as a guide to make sure the assignment is complete. Assign any letter grade based on the fact that the student followed each step of the writing process and the composition contains all parts indicated in the checklist.

This option works well when time is limited and the teacher and student want to move on to the next composition.

# HOW TO USE

1. View the video lesson.
2. Read the text for today's lesson.
3. Complete the assignment.
4. Verbally describe today's lesson and preview the next lesson.

## How long should my student spend on one lesson?

Depending on the topic and the student, there are many different variables to consider in such a question. Typically, a good rule to follow is: Do not complete the worksheets/assignment sheets unless the student understands the concepts presented in the video lesson. Students may need to watch the video more than once. After an understanding of the new concept is evident, students will complete the activity.

## Textbook/Workbook Format

Video lessons and textbook/workbook lessons correspond by title and number.



Lesson numbers indicate individual days unless the calendar icon is shown. See example below. *(Please note numerical references are for examples only.)*

### Lesson 8 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 8 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 8.
3. Complete Lesson 8 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next lesson (Lesson 9).

### Lesson 9 Day 1 (“Day 1” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 9 Day 1 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 9.
3. Complete Lesson 9 written work for all days with Day 1 calendar icon present.
4. Explain what you learned and preview next activity (Lesson 9 Day 2).

### Lesson 9 Day 2 (“Day 2” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 9 Day 2 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Lesson 9 video again.
2. Complete Lesson 9 written work for all days with Day 2 calendar icon present.
3. Explain what you learned and preview next activity (Lesson 9 Day 3).

### Lesson 10 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 10 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 10.
3. Complete Lesson 10 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 11 Day 1).

## Lesson 17 – Adverbs That Modify Verbs

An **adverb** modifies the verbs. Most *adverbs* end with the suffix “-ly.”

*The cat purred.* + Adverb: **Loudly.** =

- *The cat purred **loudly**.*
- *The cat **loudly** purred.*
- **Loudly**, *the cat purred.*



**Underline each *adverb* in these sentences.**

1. Mark angrily slammed the door.
2. The chicken safely made it to the other side.
3. The children asked boldly for more cookies.
4. Samantha rarely watches movies.
5. The detective looked at the evidence closely.
6. Diane politely asked for some water.
7. The dancer gracefully leapt across the stage.
8. I instantly regretted eating four cheeseburgers.



**Underline each *adverb* in this paragraph.**

*Today was finally Violet’s birthday! She energetically jumped out of bed and ran downstairs. Her parents were waiting with a big stack of pancakes. Violet eagerly filled her plate, and she happily noticed the presents in the corner. Today would surely be wonderful!*

## Lesson 17 – Adverbs That Modify Verbs

An *adverb* modifies the verb. Most *adverbs* end with the suffix “-ly.”



**Complete each sentence with your own *adverb*.**

1. Harrison \_\_\_\_\_ dropped his change on the ground.
2. The dog barked \_\_\_\_\_ at the hissing cat.
3. The students \_\_\_\_\_ worked on their assignments.
4. Terrion answered the teacher’s questions \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The palm trees swayed \_\_\_\_\_ during the hurricane.
6. Jerry \_\_\_\_\_ flipped through the phone book.



**Rewrite each sentence and add your own *adverb*.**

1. Mel and Allie had to finish their homework.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. They wanted to play outside with their friends.  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Their mother encouraged them to work hard.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Allie gazed out the window.  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Mel reminded her to finish working.  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. They completed their homework and went outside!  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 17 – Adverbs That Modify Verbs

An *adverb* modifies the verbs. Most *adverbs* end with the suffix “-ly.”



Complete each sentence using the adverbs in the table.

instantly	suddenly	nervously
calmly	excitedly	quietly
quickly	patiently	reluctantly

*Adverbs* can be a single word, or they can be phrases. *Adverbs* answer these questions: “How?” “When?” “Where?” “Why?”

1. Charles \_\_\_\_\_ walked into the room.
2. Ashton \_\_\_\_\_ wrote her name on the paper.
3. The audience \_\_\_\_\_ waited for the show to begin.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, the lights went out!
5. Caroline spoke \_\_\_\_\_ to her friends.
6. Arthur \_\_\_\_\_ cleaned his room.
7. \_\_\_\_\_, the classmates chattered to one another.
8. The family \_\_\_\_\_ loved its new dog.
9. My dad \_\_\_\_\_ read the evening newspaper.
10. I \_\_\_\_\_ signed up for the talent show.
11. McKay waited \_\_\_\_\_ for his turn on the waterslide.
12. The invaders moved through the castle \_\_\_\_\_.



## Lesson 23 – Action Verbs in Action

An **action verb** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It effectively communicates to the reader what the subject is doing. Strong action verbs are important tools in written language.



The sentences below contain no **action verbs**. Rewrite them by adding strong **action verbs** where indicated.

1. Maybell \_\_\_ upstairs to her room.

---

2. The wolf pack \_\_\_ through the snowy forest.

---

3. A colorful bird \_\_\_ on the empty windowsill .

---

4. The first place trophy suddenly \_\_\_ from the top shelf!

---

5. Ash and Brock \_\_\_ of grand adventures.

---

6. The sun \_\_\_ brightly on the calm woodland scene.

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7. The exhausted runner \_\_\_ onto his bed.

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8. A team of villains \_\_\_ a bank on Thursday.

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9. Calvin \_\_\_ a new game to play with his friend.

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10. The neighbors' dogs \_\_\_ the whole Christmas dinner!

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## Lesson 23 – Action Verbs in Action

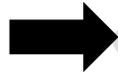


### Beware! Dangerous Words Ahead!

Some *action verbs* should be avoided in your writing because they are too vague to properly describe action, or they have been used too much in speaking or writing and have lost their effectiveness. Some of these words are **feel, get, go, have, look, say, sit, walk, and want**. When you are writing, use a thesaurus to find words that are more descriptive and creative.

#### Instead of...

go



#### Try one of these...

*travel, journey, leave,  
escape, proceed*

talk



*chat, speak, utter,  
converse, express*

run



*race, scamper, sprint,  
dash, bound*

see



*detect, view, witness,  
observe, notice*

get



*earn, fetch, snag,  
grab buy*

## Lesson 36 – Figurative Language – Metaphor



**Figurative language** goes beyond the literal meaning of words to enhance your writing.

A **metaphor** compares two things without using the word *like* or *as*.

*Julia's smile was a ray of sunshine.*

Meaning: Julia's smile was as pretty and uplifting as sunshine.



### Underline the metaphor in the poem and paragraph.

My uncle said the grandest thing,  
And he's someone who knows.  
"The moon is Earth's hula hoop,  
'cause round and round it goes!"

Metaphors are reserved for extra special statements that need power. Use them sparingly!



*Max would do anything on a dare. He wore his sister's clothes, he licked tires, and he dyed his hair green. Then, he was dared to eat a hot pepper. The hot pepper was fire in Max's mouth! He cried and drank water but he couldn't cool the burning on his tongue. Afterwards, Max wouldn't take any more dares.*



### Complete the metaphor in each excerpt. Do not use the word *like* or *as*.

1. The walk to Tabitha's mailbox is freezing during the winter. By the time she gets back inside, her fingers are \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Night is like a beautiful, fancy lady. The moon is her pearl necklace, and the stars are \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Henry sat on the porch and looked out over the lake. The water was \_\_\_\_\_, reflecting the trees, the sky, and the mountain.



## Lesson 41 – Descriptive Paragraph Brainstorm

*Descriptive writing* describes someone or something using sensory details.

When a topic is not chosen for you by the prompt, it can be difficult to choose one by yourself. Luckily, there is an excellent tool to help make choosing a topic an easier task.



**Brainstorming** is an effective tool to use when choosing a topic. Start by brainstorming a broad range of ideas, and then narrow your ideas to a single topic.

**Read the prompt and identify both the audience and the purpose. Then, brainstorm your ideas using the graphic organizer and choose a topic.**

### Prompt

- *Imagine you had the opportunity to visit a 100-year-old mansion. In a paragraph, describe the mansion or one room in the mansion in great detail.*

Who is the audience? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

**If you chose to describe a room, make a list of rooms that you might have visited.**



**Next, choose three rooms from the list and record them in the boxes below.**

**Finally, eliminate two rooms and record your final choice in the box below. This will be the topic of your paragraph.**





# Lesson 41 – Descriptive Paragraph

## Organize

Before you begin the actual writing process, it is important to **organize** what you will be writing and to create a plan. A plan will give you a clear direction for your writing and give you a foundation to begin building your composition.

You need to plan your opening sentence, several supporting sentences (the details and examples that make up the body of your paragraph), and your closing sentence. Avoid full sentences and instead write phrases and simple terms.

**Use the graphic organizer to plan your paragraph.**

💡	Write the ideas for your opening sentence to introduce your topic and captivate your reader.
O	
💡	Write details to support your topic.
D	
D	
D	
D	
D	
💡	Write the ideas to conclude your paragraph and bring it to a successful close.
C	





## Lesson 41 – Descriptive Paragraph Draft

**Drafting** is the simple process of taking the ideas from your plan and converting them into sentences. At this stage in the writing process, it is acceptable to focus on communicating your ideas effectively rather than trying to perfect your writing.

Sample from today’s video lesson:

O	Backyard 100-year-old mansion
D	Large trees
D	Cement fish pond
D	Barn in the back
D	Gazebo
D	Flowers
C	Backyard pretty/enjoyable

The *closing sentence* should:

- bring your paragraph to a successful close
- re-state your topic
- *not* introduce any new details or information

*I visited a 100-year-old mansion and loved the backyard. There were large trees and flowers everywhere. A big barn was at the back of the yard. There was a gazebo, too. The fish pond was near the gazebo. The backyard was very beautiful and enjoyable.*

**Draft your paragraph using the information in your plan.**

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## Lesson 42 – Descriptive Paragraph

### Revise



**Revision** is the process of making changes to what you have written in order to make it more effective. Using stronger verbs, replacing words, or simply changing sentence structure can improve communication.

Remember, you do not have to change *everything* you have written. Simply make changes, where necessary, to **improve** your paragraph.

- **Draft**

There were large trees and flowers everywhere

**Revised**

**Large oak trees stood all over the yard with their branches extending to provide pleasant shade.**

**Revise your draft.** Start by reading your draft out loud, touching each word as you read. Search for opportunities to add or change words, phrases, or sentences to improve your writing.

Reading your draft out loud and touching each word as you read will help you revise more effectively.

- Touching each word will help you focus on one thing at a time.
- Additionally, you might notice things you didn't see before when you hear yourself read.

**Read your draft aloud, touching each word as you read.**

- Revised word choice
- Revised sentence structure





## Lesson 42 – Descriptive Paragraph Checklist

<b>Introduction (Opening Sentence)</b>	
	Did you introduce your topic?
	Is your topic stated clearly and in a descriptive way?

<b>Body (Detail and Example Sentences)</b>	
	Does your body contain details that support your topic?
	Are your details descriptive?
	Do you appeal to the reader's senses?

<b>Closing (Closing Sentence)</b>	
	Does your closing sentence bring the paragraph to a successful close?

<b>Overall</b>	
	Do you have a clear beginning, middle, and end?
	Do you use transition words between details and examples?
	Did you use vivid and/or figurative language to improve communication?
	Did you stay on topic?

<b>Mechanics</b>	
	I have spelled my words correctly.
	I have used capitalization correctly.
	I have used punctuation correctly.
	I indented the first sentence of my paragraph.



# EXTRA PRACTICE

## Descriptive Paragraph

Now it's  
your turn!



1. Read the **prompt**. Then, **brainstorm** your ideas on a clean sheet of paper and choose a topic.

↳ *Imagine that scientists located another planet in our universe. Describe in great detail strange creatures one might see on the different planet.*



2. **Plan** and **organize** your thoughts using **graphic organizer(s)**.  
(Additional graphic organizers available in the *Assessment/Resource Booklet*)



3. **Draft** your paragraph on a clean sheet of paper using the information in your plan.



4. **Revise** your draft. Start by reading your draft out loud, touching each word as you read. Search for opportunities to add or change words, phrases, or sentences to improve your writing.

↳ **CHECKLIST**

- Revised word choice
- Revised sentence structure



5. **Edit** and **publish** your **final draft**. Copy your revised draft to a clean sheet of paper. Correct all capitalization, punctuation, and spelling errors.

↳ **CHECKLIST**

- Corrected capitalization errors
- Corrected punctuation errors
- Corrected spelling errors



## Lesson 45 – Persuasive Paragraph Organize

Before you begin the actual writing process, it is important to **organize** what you will be writing and to create a plan. A plan will give you a clear direction for your writing and give you a foundation to begin building your composition.

You need to plan your opening sentence, several supporting sentences (the details and examples that make up the body of your paragraph), and your closing sentence. Avoid full sentences and instead write phrases and simple terms.

**Use the graphic organizer to plan your paragraph.**

	Write the ideas for your opening sentence to introduce your topic and captivate your reader.
<b>O</b>	
	Write details to support your topic. Then, write an example for each detail.
<b>D</b>	
<b>E</b>	
<b>D</b>	
<b>E</b>	
	Write the ideas to conclude your paragraph and bring it to a successful close.
<b>C</b>	