



Writers in Residence

Volume 1

Apprentice

by Debra Bell, PhD

with

Joanna Breault

Hannah Eagleson, PhD



Apologia Educational Ministries, Inc.



WRITERS IN RESIDENCE, VOLUME 1

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For
Jean Louise

With love,
Situ

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Quick Guide



The Writers in Residence (WIR) series is a writing-focused language arts program. While completing high-interest writing assignments, students learn about sentence structure, the parts of speech, and the conventions of the English language for punctuation, capitalization, and usage. This meaningful context shows students how skill and understanding in the language arts enable them to create clear, engaging stories and essays readers want to read. The writing tasks and language arts topics taught in volume 1 are listed below. A systematic review of these topics is incorporated throughout the Writers in Residence series.

Writers in Residence, volume 1 – Apprentice:

Unit 1: I Remember

Writing Assignment: “When I Was Young”
(sentences)

Language Arts: action verbs, nouns, conjunctions, subjects, predicates

Unit 2: I Imagine

Writing Assignment: “Very Truly Yours”
(creative writing)

Language Arts: adjectives, proper nouns, personal letter, capitalization, commas, simple sentence, linking verbs, complements

Unit 3: I Investigate

Writing Assignment: “My Family Hall of Fame”
(research writing)

Language Arts: paragraphs, modifiers, descriptive adjectives, determiners, sensory words

Unit 4: I Think

Writing Assignment: “My Favorite Author”
(opinion essay)

Language Arts: paragraphs, adverbs, transitions

Unit 5: I Remember

Writing Assignment: “The History of Me”
(autobiography)

Language Arts: first person, phrases, prepositions, prepositional phrases, object of the preposition

Unit 6: I Imagine

Writing Assignment: “Zap! Pow! Kazam!”
(short story)

Language Arts: quotation marks, punctuating and formatting dialogue, commas, interjections, question marks, exclamation points



Forthcoming:

Volume 2: Journeyman, Volume 3: Craftsman, Volume 4: Master Craftsman



Preface

For more than thirty years, I have taught students how to give voice to their experiences and ideas through the written word. I have loved doing so—it has been my life’s work. There is nothing more charming than tracing our children’s progress toward adulthood through the stories they invent and the opinions they passionately defend in their writing. The writing portfolios my own four children produced during our homeschooling years are among my most treasured possessions. I am grateful for all the time we carved out of our schedule to write about things we cared about.

This is what I hope the Writers in Residence (WIR) series becomes for you—a treasured record of your own child’s maturation as a writer and thinker. This amazing journey toward adulthood is worth capturing and treasuring forever.

WIR aims to create a record of your children’s intellectual growth by giving them command of the English language. This program shows students how to capture their experiences and ideas in writing with vigor and verve. My goal is to give each young writer confidence, purpose, and a sense of calling. Now more than ever, we must be able to express ourselves compellingly in writing if we hope to be heard or to make a difference in our culture.

I hope you can sense my passion and vision for this project. I do not view writing or the language arts as confined to a school setting. I believe language is an amazing grace from God and a gift to steward and revel in. Skill and confidence in crafting words will open doors for your children and help lead them into their futures. I am honored to play a small part in making that happen.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Debra Bell

The stories, essays,
and reports your
children create
as they grow
will become the
archives of their
childhood.



How to use This Book

Welcome parents, teachers, and writing coaches! This introduction includes an overview of the teaching philosophy and methods used throughout the series.

Why Writers in Residence Is Unique

Many writing programs ask students to produce four traditional forms of writing: personal, expository, persuasive, and narrative. But authentic writing tasks (the kinds we engage in as adults) rarely fall exclusively into any one of these categories. Rather, most adult writing requires us to combine several forms of writing to achieve our intended purpose and to connect with our readers. The assignments in the Writers in Residence series reflect this reality. Over the course of the program, students will learn about and practice the types of writing that adults regularly use for work and for pleasure. At the same time, they will master the concepts and skills necessary to be ready for college by the end of high school.

Each unit features an expert model from a professional writer, including some well-known authors. Students study specific aspects of the author's craft, and then use the model as an inspiration for their own writing assignments.

These are the four types of writing tasks in the Writers in Residence series:

I Remember

These writing prompts ask students to write about experiences they have had. They correlate roughly with the traditional personal narrative. Memories and experiences are a rich source of ideas for expert writers. Here is the wellspring of our life stories—unique tales that God is authoring for His purposes and His glory. Not only will students learn to tell the tales that set their lives apart from all others, but they will also learn to think reflectively about the meaning and purpose of these events—and perhaps through the process figure out what God is calling them to next.

I Imagine

These writing prompts are high-interest creative writing assignments. Here students begin to study expert models of fiction closely and learn to include the elements of fiction in their own stories. At the same time, they see that authors often draw upon their own memories and experiences as a springboard for many of the stories they weave. Students also learn that a narrative arc is an important strategy writers use to keep readers reading even in a research or argument paper.



I Investigate

These writing prompts introduce research skills and research writing, but with a twist: The research projects in WIR mirror the world of investigative journalism, where field research and interviews are essential sources of information. Students also learn how to detect bias in their sources and their own writing. Finally, young writers learn how to include (not suppress) their own voices in what they report.

I Think

These writing prompts teach students the fundamental elements of argument writing, of which persuasive writing is only a subset. In an argument essay, an author takes a position and defends it with logical reasoning, facts, and apt examples. This is the mode of discourse in an academic setting and the most important type of writing students must master if they want to have their ideas considered in a college classroom or the broader culture. Further, learning to write cogent arguments is the best way to help students learn to think more deeply and critically about the ideas, philosophies, and claims circling around them. (In WIR volume 1, an opinion essay is used as a first step toward learning how to write a more formal argument in later volumes.)

How to Make WIR Work for Your Students

WIR is designed to be flexible. Please take advantage of this and set reasonable expectations for each student who uses the Writers in Residence series. WIR is challenging, but not developmentally inappropriate. Challenge is good. Kids need to break a cognitive sweat if learning is to take place. They need a sense of accomplishment if we want them to take pride in their achievements. However, overchallenging children can be detrimental. They must feel successful, not frustrated. Because of age and developmental readiness, some students will complete volume 1 in a year; other students may need a year and a half. It is important that students enjoy the writing process and find pleasure in their creative endeavors. Use this priority as a guide to help you set the standard for each child. “Progress, not perfection” should always be the goal.

“Progress, not perfection” should always be the goal.

You can use the Writers in Residence series in several different ways to fit your family’s overall needs and each child’s readiness and interests:

1. The target age group for volume 1 is fourth grade and up. You can use WIR with several different children at multiple grade levels at the same time. Be sure to adjust your expectations of each child accordingly. You can start the program with a student who is reading chapter books independently.



2. The program is thorough and systematic. It introduces new terms and concepts and gives students opportunities to practice using them. Exposure is the intention in the lower-level volumes; mastery is the goal in the upper-level ones. Lessons build on previously taught concepts and skills. Ideally, students should complete all the modules in a volume before moving on to the next volume, regardless of their age.
3. How students complete that work is your choice. WIR includes a lot of questions. For a younger child, writing out answers to all the questions may become a tedious chore. You don't have to require this! It's fine to just talk about some or all of the questions together. In many cases, discussing the writing process and decisions with a student is the best way to help him or her grow as a writer.
4. Students should attempt all the writing assignments since later volumes build on previously taught material. However, if an assignment is too easy, it is fine to ask a student just to read through the material or modify the assignment to create greater challenge or interest.
5. The suggested schedule on pages xlv–xlvii shows 128 days of work. This means students can complete volume 1 in thirty-two weeks if they work on assignments four days a week. However, this is just one possibility. Students should spend at least three days per week on this program. Younger students may find that spreading the work over five days per week for thirty-six or more weeks is the best plan for staying motivated and managing the challenge.

Co-ops, Writing Groups, and Writing Coaches

The Writers in Residence series works well with writing groups. The suggested daily schedule lists assignments for four days per week. The fifth day of any week can then be used for a co-op day or a writing group. In both these settings, students can share their drafts and final versions with others, and adult leaders can provide further instruction and feedback based upon the material in WIR.

A writing coach is any adult who wants to guide students through the material in WIR in an organized way—through an online class, by individualized tutoring, or in a co-op setting. Additional materials for co-ops and writing coaches are in development. You can sign up to receive notifications about the release date for these materials and future volumes in the WIR series at www.writers-in-residence.com.



Teaching Philosophy

The Writers in Residence series walks each student through the steps necessary to move from novice to expert writer—one who is confident and fascinated with the creative potential of language. To accomplish this, the following principles guide the teaching methods:

- 1. Writing must be authentic.** Emerging writers should follow the same pathways professional writers have taken in the journey from beginner to experienced writer to expert writer. Assignments should mimic the writing activities and writing process adults engage in. Adults do not write to be graded. Rather they write to inform, to influence, to entertain, and to understand themselves better. In the process, the best writers solicit feedback from editors and readers so that their final creation is the best that it can be. These are the conditions and context that the Writers in Residence series seeks to simulate.
- 2. Writing should be purposeful.** Writing tasks should be meaningful and interesting to students. Giving students a range of topics to write about and access to readers who are genuinely interested in what they have to say facilitates this goal. Parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, and writing groups may all be pressed into service as an audience for emerging writers.
- 3. Writing is an apprenticeship.** Children master the English language by deep and long exposure to writers who have employed the creative potential of the written word for a wide variety of purposes. This means writers must be readers—but not just casual readers. Students should learn to read closely and to notice what authors do to hold readers' interest, provoke their thinking, and focus their attention. Expert models from familiar authors and other experienced writers serve as a foundation for the writing tasks throughout WIR.
- 4. Writing requires risk-taking and experimentation.** The world has no need for yet another person who can write a high school composition according to a prescribed form. What we need are those who can harness the power of language to craft narrative and argument that will shed new light on old mysteries. We need the unique, God-given voice of each child to be captured, polished, and shared. For this purpose, WIR creates a culture where students are rewarded for experimenting and taking risks. The emphasis is foremost on each student's ideas and unique voice. Students must be assured that progress, not perfection, is always the goal.

We need the
unique, God-given
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5. Writing is cyclical, repetitive, maddening, and inspired. Writers must write to discover what they have to say. The process of writing is primed by the wellspring of inspiration, whose source is hidden who knows where! Writers ponder, write, retract, discuss, meditate, pray, rewrite, rethink, revise, stew, walk away, return, throw away, start again, eat chocolate, rewrite . . . and onward. The writing process is a discipline and a mystery. This is why it is so satisfying when writers finally get just the right words in just the right places. This means that students may write several versions of the same assignment or may change things substantially from one draft to another. This is a sign that they are on their way to becoming experts. Experts understand that good writing involves revising until their writing goals are achieved.

Writers ponder, write, retract, discuss, meditate, pray, rewrite, rethink, revise, stew, walk away, return, throw away, start again, eat chocolate, rewrite . . . and onward.

6. Readers are paramount. Students must never lose sight of the fact that written communication is intended to be read and understood. What we have to say must be relevant and meaningful for our readers. Therefore, writing is a humble endeavor—one where we always advocate for our readers by often considering how to compose our thoughts with greater grace, wit, and clarity.

WIR frequently reminds students that a writer's number one job is to keep the reader reading.

Teaching Method

General Overview

I understand the time constraints of parents and teachers. You are multitasking all the time—probably juggling many children, many subjects, and many schedules simultaneously. While this program is student-centered and student-directed, it is designed with parents, teachers, and writing coaches in mind as well.

In particular, the introduction, rubric, and checklists in each unit are designed to help you quickly grasp the assignments and a student's progress. The *Answer Key* (available separately) is also written so that you do not have to page back through the modules in order to explain an answer to a student.

Even so, please preview *Writers in Residence* before your student begins this program. This will give you a better framework for understanding the teaching approach and activities. It will also show you the trajectory I am following to build students' understanding about writing and the language arts.



Six Traits Writing Model

WIR uses a modified version of the six traits model for teaching and assessing writing. During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, several research teams asked writing teachers and college professors to identify the characteristics of good writing. Six distinct traits were mentioned over and over again in their answers. These six traits have been refined and applied in many classrooms and writing courses over the past two decades. The six traits are not new. They are just well defined and described in ways students seem to understand. I have used the six traits model to teach students to write and evaluate their own writing for nearly two decades. Since I adopted this paradigm, I find that students better understand how to improve their writing—and parents do too. The six traits approach takes the mystery out of teaching writing and provides the clarity we need to talk with our students about the strengths and weaknesses of the writing they produce.

The following six traits are used in WIR:

1. ideas
2. organization
3. sentence structure*
4. word choice
5. voice
6. conventions

These traits are systematically introduced, explained, and practiced in the Writers in Residence series. No matter what type of writing a student is asked to produce, the final draft is evaluated using a rubric based upon this six traits model.

(A reproducible infographic designed to help students remember and apply the six traits of good writing appears on pages xl–xli.)

The Writing Process

The writing process is not always systematic or linear (see item 5 in the preceding section about teaching philosophy), but there are definite stages to the writing process:

1. planning
2. drafting
3. revising
4. editing
5. polishing

Expert writers accept that they must take a piece of writing through each of these stages multiple times before it is usable or publishable. WIR introduces students to these stages and gives them a toolbox of strategies to use at each point in the writing process.

*WIR uses sentence structure in place of sentence fluency. Later volumes of WIR will teach sentence fluency as a subset of sentence structure.



The reproducible infographic on pages xlii–xliii attempts to show the cyclical and repetitive nature of the creative process. (“Two steps forward, one step back” might also be a helpful description.) Please keep this in mind as students struggle to gain expertise.

The Assignment Cycle

WIR cycles through four repeated types of writing tasks. All important forms of written expression can fit within this framework:

- ☆ **I Remember** writing assignments help students master the personal narrative.
- ☆ **I Imagine** assignments teach creative writing, such as short stories, poetry, and novels.
- ☆ **I Investigate** assignments teach students important research skills.
- ☆ **I Think** tasks teach opinion and argument writing, of which persuasive writing is a subset. (Argument writing is also known as academic writing.)

Language Arts

The conventions of the English language—grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, formatting, and usage—are best taught in context. Students learn to value these conventions by using them to accomplish tasks that they care about. Learning conventions through this method requires much less time than the traditional method. You’ll learn more about the WIR approach to grammar in the section on “Grammar Instruction” on pages xxvi–xxviii.

Spelling

WIR does not teach spelling explicitly. Rather it asks students (and parents) to edit their work for spelling errors in the final stages. Accurate spelling is not essential for clear communication. Further, overemphasizing correct spelling often results in students using only words they are confident they can spell. This creates a boring and stilted writing style that is far below what the child is capable of thinking, imagining, and talking about. In the process, the child’s voice is lost, not captured.

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To raise writers, we must create a learning culture where students are rewarded for expanding their vocabulary and experimenting with new words. To do this, spelling and usage mistakes should be tolerated, and attempts to try something new should be celebrated and encouraged.

In my experience, most students who write a lot for an audience achieve standardized spelling of common words by high school without separate instruction in this area. I suggest using a separate spelling program if the student asks for one or if the student repeatedly misspells a lot of common (not new) words and is not improving. Avoid using a program that is so time-consuming that students have little time left for real writing. Professional writers use a spell checker program to catch their spelling errors. In most cases, this is the best strategy for emerging writers as well.

The Role of a Parent, Teacher, or Writing Coach

The Writers in Residence series is designed for students to use independently, to the degree that is possible. Younger students and beginning writers need far more direct instruction and support from a parent, teacher, or writing coach than older, more experienced students. Greater independence will emerge as students gain greater control and mastery of the writing process.

However, meaningful written communication always presumes an audience; therefore, one of the greatest responsibilities of a parent, teacher, or writing coach is to provide that audience for the student. Without it, assignments are merely duties devoid of purpose. Writing must be authentic, and a student's time and efforts should be respected. What a child writes is a window into that child's intellectual life and development. Most of all, we should value the opportunity we have been given to share this process together.

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Feedback

Targeted feedback is an essential support that parents, teachers, and writing coaches give to students. The rubric for each writing assignment is designed to help you do this. It lists the key elements for each trait the student is asked to focus on in that assignment. Use the rubric as a basis for discussion and feedback.



Respond to a student's drafts as an interested reader. What ideas strike you as memorable or interesting? Talk about those first. What questions remain unanswered? Where would you like to know more? Approach sections that could be stronger from this angle. Notice new words a student uses, especially those collected from his or her reading or vocabulary lists. Celebrate effort, progress, invention, and careful attention to the elements listed on the rubric.

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Occasionally, WIR encourages students to talk through their ideas with a parent, teacher, or writing coach. These are points where adult support and input are necessary. Talking through decision making as well as helping students understand the most important elements to focus on in a writing assignment will be critical to their success.

Grading

I strongly recommend that you not assign a letter grade to a writing assignment in this volume; rather evaluate each assignment for its strengths and weaknesses and for overall progress. The section on rubrics explains how to use this form of assessment. WIR includes unit reviews and mastery tests, which you can use for grading purposes if desired.

The writing portfolio is a keepsake, an archive, and a powerful learning tool. As students review their polished written work from each school year, they will gain insight into their unique writing process, progress, and writer's voice.

The Writer's Portfolio

Final drafts of the writing assignments should be compiled in one place. Any additional writing projects from the year should also be included. The writer's portfolio might be posted online or kept in a computer folder or a three-ring binder. If possible, the child should decorate the portfolio, title it, and date it. However the portfolio is configured, it should be designed to share with others. Children need a sense of accomplishment and a record of their progress. The writing portfolio is a keepsake, an archive, and a powerful learning tool. As students review their polished written work from each school year, they will gain insight into their unique writing process, progress, and writer's voice.



Grammar Instruction

English Grammar Defined

English grammar is the classification system we use to describe, explain, and analyze the basic units of speech used for written and oral communication. These basic units of speech are called grammatical units. (Grammatical units include parts of speech, phrases, clauses, and sentences.) Every domain from math to science to music has a method for organizing and classifying its fundamentals. It is the language we use to talk about a subject with others. We can't master a subject if we don't speak the language.

Grammar doesn't create content. But it can create beauty. English grammar provides the architecture for your child's ideas. And that's why it is important.

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What Works

Here's what I've learned in thirty years of teaching kids how to write (and to love it).

Kids can learn to follow the rules of English grammar without completing tedious exercises. They can learn how to *use* the fundamentals of English grammar to write better sentences. They can even find the process interesting. And it is okay if the adults in their lives are also learning more about English grammar right alongside them.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you help your child with the grammar lessons in WIR:

1. Kids can't learn anything if they are not motivated. If students do not turn on their brains, focus their attention on the matter at hand, and choose to think deeply about the information, learning doesn't take place. (This truth explains why you don't remember a lot of things you supposedly learned in school. You weren't paying attention!)
2. It is easier to push a cart downhill than to pull it uphill. That's what momentum (or motivation) does. Parents and teachers need to use a downhill scenario, then, for teaching grammar.
3. Grammar instruction is not an end in itself. There is no eternal value—and only a modest earthly one—in labeling and diagramming sentences. Grammar lessons should have practical value for the students, and each lesson must be linked to a real purpose that is immediate and relevant to their lives.

Grammar
instruction is not
an end in itself.

4. Language arts (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and usage) should be taught through practical application to writing tasks that kids care about. When students can study the conventions of English grammar in the writings of authors they admire, they have a sustaining interest and motivation to learn how to follow these rules. In fact, they will master the fundamentals of English grammar with increasing ease as the cycle of completing meaningful tasks and studying expert models is repeated.
5. The most powerful teaching method at your disposal is not in what you say, but in what you model. If you embrace the approach to grammar in the Writers in Residence series and show your kids that you find this information interesting and valuable, then they will get the message that English grammar is important to adult life.

The End Goal

Understanding the grammar of English won't produce original ideas or engaging content, but it will help students improve the structure and clarity of what they write. It will also help them analyze their sentences and identify sections that can be recast in more powerful ways. My goal is to teach young writers how grammatical units *function* so that they can engineer elegant, original sentences that have power and artistry.

The goal is to teach young writers how grammatical units function so that they can engineer elegant, original sentences that have power and artistry.

Grammar Focus in Volume 1

This volume introduces the parts of speech and shows students how each one can function in a sentence. The parts of speech introduced include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections. (Pronouns are not covered in depth in volume 1; they are taught in volume 2.) Volume 1 also introduces the fundamentals of capitalization and punctuation.

Two other grammatical units are also included in volume 1: prepositional phrases and complements. Some parts of speech cannot be understood apart from the grammatical unit they are always included with. A preposition is always a part of a prepositional phrase, and a linking verb is always followed by a complement.

In addition to direct grammar instruction, WIR includes expert models that show students how accomplished writers use the grammatical units under discussion, as well as capitalization and punctuation, to create the stories we love.

Good writers are self-aware writers. They are their own best critics.



By the end of volume 1, students will be able to analyze some of their own tendencies—both good and bad—in the sentences they build. Good writers are self-aware writers. They are their own best critics.

Future Volumes

In volume 2, students will start to use the language of English grammar to describe and discuss their writing. They will learn more about the parts of speech included in volume 1 and will be introduced to different types of pronouns, phrases, and clauses. Then they will learn about different types of sentences. Students will practice recognizing the sentence patterns in the expert models provided and will start to include them in their own writing assignments. WIR will also include advanced punctuation, capitalization, and formatting skills and in-depth study of verbs and tenses.

At the upper levels, we will tackle more difficult concepts like verbals, subject-verb agreement, and pronouns and their antecedents. Finally, we will address style issues: parallel construction, coordination and subordination of ideas, shifts in subjects and tenses, wordiness, and redundancy. Throughout the series, students will study a wide variety of rich expert models from top-notch writers.

Why They'll Get It and Not Forget It

- ☆ Research shows that the students who frequently read and are read to, as well as those who write a lot, are most likely to use the conventions of the English language with the greatest accuracy and success.
- ☆ Intensive grammar study completed in isolation does not create better writers and readers.
- ☆ Exposure, not mastery, is the goal in the lower-level volumes of WIR. By returning to ideas and skills over and over again through unique and varied writing assignments, students will see how they can use what they learn.
- ☆ WIR uses a spiral approach to teaching concepts. A concept is introduced in one volume and expanded on as the series progresses. Information is not merely repeated; it is elaborated upon and applied in new situations. Students' understanding of concepts will deepen and broaden over time when used in multiple situations.
- ☆ By the end of the series, students will have learned the content and skills presented in WIR through repeated, applied practice in a variety of contexts. Taught in this manner, they will not forget it.

In conclusion, have fun, learn alongside your kids, and push the cart downhill, not up!



Repeated Elements

Unit Introduction

This page provides an overview of the unit for both the student and the parent, teacher, or writing coach. It is designed as a reference tool to help you quickly grasp the writing assignment, focus of instruction, and language arts skills taught in the upcoming four modules.

Rubric

A rubric is a special checklist for evaluating and grading writing or other projects. The rubric for the writing assignment appears in the unit introduction and again in the last module of the unit. The rubric for each writing assignment focuses on the specific strategies and skills covered under each of the traits in that unit and each prior unit. Students are held accountable only for what they have already learned and practiced. The focus is on progress, not perfection. All movement toward maturity in content and skill should be emphasized and celebrated. Students evaluate their finished assignments with the rubric. Parents, teachers, and other readers use a reviewer’s version of the rubric, provided in the appendix.

Rubric Point System:
 5 points – This is the best I’ve ever done.
 4 points – This is a strength in this piece.
 3 points – I improved here in this assignment.
 2 points – I remembered to pay attention to this.
 1 point – I need to improve in this area.

Rubric for “Very Truly Yours”		Points Earned
Traits of Good Writing		
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think my letter will interest a child of the age and gender I have selected. I have left clues in my letter to keep my readers interested. I included examples and details that show but don't tell my character traits. Readers of my letter can tell what people, places, and things in my life are important to me. 	
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I like the way the order of my sentences makes pictures in my mind. My readers like the way I have organized my sentences. 	
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All my nouns are as specific as they can be. I have used vigorous verbs to describe the action. 	
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have followed the rules for capitalization carefully. I have punctuated my personal letter correctly. I have checked to make sure all my words are spelled correctly. I have formatted the personal letter properly. 	
Total		

Writer’s Questions

At the beginning of each module, the Writer’s Questions remind students to turn on their brains and get ready to learn. Students should hold these questions in mind as they work through the module to gain experience and expertise. At the end of each module, students will discuss their answers to these questions with a parent, teacher, or writing coach. This activity will reinforce their understanding and retention of the most important information in that module.

Writer’s Questions

Where can I get ideas to write about?

How can I make the action in my stories more exciting?



Sneak Peek

This section at the beginning of each module provides a preview of the primary skills and concepts to be practiced and incorporated into the writing assignment. These objectives also provide insight into possible answers to the writer’s questions.



The Assignment

The writing assignment at the beginning of each module identifies the key areas students will focus on as they work through the unit.

Expert Model

Each unit includes one or more pieces of writing by an expert writer—often a familiar author. Students learn to analyze these models and to note the specific strategies the expert used to accomplish the goal of the writing task.

EXPERT MODEL

When I was young in the mountains, Grandfather came home in the evening covered with the black dust of a coal mine.

When I was young in the mountains, Grandmother spread the table with hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra.

When I was young in the mountains, we sat on the porch swing in the evenings, and Grandfather sharpened my pencils with his pocketknife. Grandmother sometimes shelled beans and sometimes braided my hair.

Student Samples

Samples of student work show students how to complete writing activities.



Writer’s Toolbox

Throughout WIR, specific strategies that expert writers use are set apart in the Writer’s Toolbox. The appendix includes a list of these strategies in an attractive, reproducible form for posting in the student’s work area.



Graphic Organizers

WIR uses graphic organizers to help students generate ideas and organize their content. Graphic organizers are more powerful teaching tools than formal outlining because they help students visualize their projects and identify the relationships among the parts of their essays and stories.

Author Comparison Chart			
Author			
Sources of Facts about the Author			
Possible Reasons This Author Is My Favorite			
Sources of Examples and Details			



The Sandbox

The Sandbox sections of WIR give students a place to experiment with various writing strategies. They also give students a break from the longer writing task of the unit. Student writing improves when students write a lot. The Sandbox is one way to keep students composing.

Student writing improves when students write a lot. The Sandbox is one way to keep students composing.

Vocabulary

Each unit of WIR includes a list of vocabulary words relevant to the writing assignment. In addition to asking students to define the new words, WIR also directs young writers to apply them—or words like them—to the writing assignment. Furthermore, many terms in the text of WIR are defined in the glossary at the back of the book; these words are highlighted in the lesson text. Vocabulary is more heavily emphasized in the forthcoming companion program, *Readers in Residence*, where students will see vocabulary words used in context. This is the key way all of us—including students—learn what words mean and how they can be used.

Tense – the form of the verb that specifies the time when the action takes place.

Word Sleuth

WIR regularly reminds students to add to their Word Collection in the appendix. They collect new words they want to remember to use and words they realize they are prone to misspell. Collecting words helps students pay closer attention to what they read at the word level, as well as to the words they use in their own writing.

Module Checklist

A checklist at the end of each module serves a twofold purpose: It helps students keep track of their progress and gives parents, teachers, and writing coaches a quick way to make sure students have fully completed all the assigned work in each module. The point system is a method of evaluation that emphasizes progress rather than grading. The student checks off the work he or she has completed. The parent, teacher, or writing coach awards points based upon the point system provided.

Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
Checklist Point System: 1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or writing coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines: 6 – exemplary in quality and effort 5 – exemplary in either quality or effort 4 – acceptable in quality and effort 3 – acceptable in either quality or effort 2 – needs improvement in quality and effort 1 – incomplete		
1.5 Panning for Gold • Write the name of the special place from your childhood you are most interested in writing about.		
1.6 Gather Your Best Ideas • Use the strategies in 1.5 Panning for Gold to help you recall specific events and experiences that occurred in your special place.		
• Talk about your memories with others to help you generate lots of details about your special place.		
1.7 Memory Chart • Use the memory chart to collect the memories from your special place.		
• Check to make sure your memories came from one place.		
1.9 Write Your Memory Sentences • Write at least ten memory sentences.		
• Follow Cynthia Rylant's sentence pattern from <i>When I Was Young in the Mountains</i> .		
1.10 Vigorous Verbs • List more specific verbs for <i>run</i> , <i>hit</i> , and <i>cut</i> .		



The Writer's Workshop

The sentence is the fundamental organizational unit for composing thought in the modern English language. (You can find the interesting history of the sentence online if you are so inclined.) Emerging writers need the most practice at the sentence level. One module in every unit specifically focuses on sentence structure. In volume 1 of WIR, students review the parts of speech and practice using them. Students then create and revise sentences in the module and in their writing assignment, focusing on this sentence part. In subsequent volumes, students will progress from learning the basic parts of speech to learning how to use phrases and clauses to build more complex sentences. Proper punctuation is taught concurrently with learning how to compose different types of sentences. The Writer's Workshop sections of WIR are marked with an orange tab to help you find them easily.

UNIT 1
MODULE 4

The Writer's Workshop

Writer's Questions
How do writers talk to other writers about writing?
What are the basic parts that writers use to build their sentences?

Sneak Peek
In this module you will learn:
• Writers use the language of the trade so they can understand each other.
• The basic building blocks of any sentence are the subject and the predicate.
• Subjects and predicates can be simple or compound.
• Conjunctions are the parts of speech used to connect sentence parts.

4.1 Sentence Craft
Have you ever visited a woodworker's workshop? What did you see?
Are some people just born able to craft beautiful objects from wood? Of course not—it takes training and practice. A master craftsman teaches and demonstrates how to work with wood, and his apprentice listens to his instruction and then tries it on his own. That's what we're going to do with words.

Review Your Progress

Systematic review of concepts and skills is integrated throughout WIR. Explicit review is provided through “Review Your Progress” sections, mastery tests, and unit reviews. A cumulative assessment in the form of a Final Review is provided at the end of each volume. However, these assessments are intended to be used as teaching tools rather than grading instruments. Allow students to review their writing and the relevant modules while composing their answers. Encourage students to talk about their responses with a parent, teacher, or writing coach before finalizing their answers to the review questions.

Unit Review

The unit review asks students to demonstrate their understanding of the writing concepts and strategies taught in the entire unit.

Mastery Test

A mastery test appears at the end of each Writer's Workshop module. It reviews the conventions of the English language and the grammar terms covered in that module, as well as all previous Writer's Workshops.



Final Review

At the end of each volume is a final review designed to reinforce and deepen students' understanding of the concepts and skills covered in that volume. Students are also asked to think reflectively about the writing projects they produced that term. This is an important step in helping young writers learn to constructively evaluate what they produce so they can learn to improve. A parent, teacher, or writing coach should participate in this process. However, the focus should be on what the student thinks, so he or she should do most of the talking.

Apprentice Log

An Apprentice Log in the appendix provides a place for students to fill in the total points they earn on the following activities in WIR:

- ☆ module checklists
- ☆ rubrics
- ☆ unit reviews
- ☆ follow-up reports (unit 3)

Students can earn an award of distinction if they earn 85% of the points possible in volume 1. Submit your request to receive your award of distinction at www.writers-in-residence.com. You will find instructions on the home page.

Writers in Residence **Apprentice Log**

Apprentice Log

Fill in one bubble for every ten points you earn from the following activities: module checklists, rubrics, unit reviews, and the follow-up report in unit 3.

You can receive an award of distinction once you earn 85% of the points possible in volume 1. Submit your request at www.writers-in-residence.com. You will find instructions on the home page.

Novice

Apprentice

504 This page represents 1,750 points. ↑

505 This page represents 3,640 points. ↑



Welcome, Students, to Writers in Residence!

Hey there! I'm glad you're here. I'm Dr. Debra Bell, and I will be your guide as you work through the writing projects in this volume.

Writers in Residence is a series that will help you use words to capture these things:

- ☆ your ideas
- ☆ your memories
- ☆ your investigations
- ☆ your stories



By the time you complete this volume, you will have collected a full year of your best writing in a portfolio you can share with others and treasure as a keepsake for years to come.

In the process, you will learn to think like a writer: You will always be on the hunt for new words, good ideas, or a fresh way to organize your thoughts.

Think of yourself as a writer-in-training who is learning to use the tools of the trade. You will begin as an apprentice and work your way up to a master craftsman. By the end, you will be confident in your ability to put into words anything you want to say.

Think of yourself as a writer-in-training who is learning to use the tools of the trade. You will begin as an apprentice and work your way up to a master craftsman.

And who knows? You may discover that this is a special talent God has given you to use for His unique purposes in your life.

Why Write?

The most important reason we should learn to write well is that God, our creator, has given us the gift of language. His Word calls us to develop the gifts He gives to their fullest potential for His purposes. (See the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:13–30 if you want to study this more.)

Throughout the Writers in Residence series, you will meet Christian writers who are using their gift of language for God's purposes. They've taken the time to share their work and thoughts on writing to give you some ideas about how God might want to use what you write.



The second reason we should learn to write well is that our ability to create—stories, poems, reports, and even essays—is one way we are made in the likeness of God. (See Genesis 5:1.) Using our creativity shows how we are like our Father in heaven. Look around at the amazing world God created out of nothing. Can you tell that God gets a lot of pleasure from using His creative powers? He obviously enjoys making things colorful, diverse, and even unusual! Do you remember what God thought about His creation? He saw that all He created was very good (Genesis 1:31).

God wants you to find a lot of pleasure in using your creative gifts too. It's just one of the many ways He shows you that He loves you and wants the work of your hands to bring a lot of joy into your life. So even though *Writers in Residence* is a curriculum you will use during school, it's not supposed to be a chore. *Writers in Residence* should be a lot of fun. If it isn't, then you should use your gift of language to write to me and tell me how you think it can be more exciting to use. I want to hear from you!

Using our creativity shows
how we are like our
Father in heaven.

Debra Bell

P.S. You can also e-mail me anything you would like—your suggestions, your stories, your questions. Write to me at dbell@debrabell.com.

Spotlight on **Christian**

Here are the Christian writers you will meet throughout *Writers in Residence*, volume 1. Take a minute to read about each one. Notice how different they are, yet they are all using their gifts for God's purposes in their lives.



Bill Myers

Bill Myers is an author, screenwriter, and director who has won over sixty national and international awards. He is best known for his children's McGee and Me DVD and book series, which has sold 4.5 million copies.

“If you make that commitment to say yes to Him, Christ will take you to places you never dreamed you'd go. It might not always be easy, but it'll be an adventure.”

Amy Green

Amy Green is the author of the Amarias Adventures, a four-part Christian fantasy series for children published by Warner Press.

“If you're constantly thinking about your relationship with God, asking questions and growing in your faith, that will come through. Your characters will have a real faith, not just a moral tacked on to the end of a story.”



Irene Howat

Irene Howat is an award-winning author who has nearly fifty titles to her name, including the beloved Lightkeepers series (*Ten Boys Who Changed the World*, *Ten Girls Who Made History*, and many others).

“I tell people that publishing came up behind me and jumped on me, rather than me looking for it. It came as a direct result of my pain and my disability, and I thank God for both of them because it opened up a most wonderful life as a writer.”



Writers

Jason Lethcoe

Jason Lethcoe is a writer who has also worked as a director, animator, and storyboard artist for the past twenty-two years. His work has been included in such movies as *Home on the Range*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*.

“Write because you have to. If there is a part of you that says ‘I have to,’ you’ll be a writer. If you love words and love the process, you’ll probably be a writer.”



Amy Parker

Amy Parker has written more than twenty books, including the best-selling *Thank You, God, for Mommy* and *Thank You, God, for Daddy*.

“I start every day with time in the Bible. I have been reading through the Bible in a year for the past four years. This gets me focused and centered.”

Phil Vischer

Phil Vischer is one of the creators of the famous and wildly successful VeggieTales series, which has sold almost 50 million videos.

“Just experiencing God in the Bible often brings wonderful ideas for my writing.”





Six Traits

The six traits are cogs in a well-oiled machine that work together to produce a finished product that will keep your readers reading!

Ideas

The clear, focused, interesting, and well-developed message I have for my readers.

Sentence Structure

The way I build my sentences with phrases and clauses so they make sense and sound pleasing to my readers.

Organization

The pattern I use to organize my ideas so that readers can follow my logic.

writing Model

Voice

The way I insert my personality into my writing so my readers recognize that I am the author.

Conventions

The standards of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage I carefully follow so my readers are not distracted or confused.

Word Choice

The specific and wide variety of nouns, verbs, and modifiers I use to show my readers precisely what I mean.



Introduction to the Writing Process

Writers ponder, write, retract, discuss, meditate, pray, rewrite, rethink, revise, stew, walk away, return, throw away, start again, eat chocolate, rewrite . . . and onward.

Start



1. Plan

- Think, research, and discuss.
- Study the rubric.



4. Revise

- Use feedback to rewrite.



2. Draft

- Get your ideas on paper.
- Organize the parts.
- Experiment with different strategies.



3. Review

- Inspect and improve.
- Get feedback from readers.



6. Revise

- Use feedback to rewrite.
- Think some more.



5. Review

- Inspect and improve some more.
- Get more feedback.



7. Edit

- Check your grammar.
- Check your spelling.
- Check punctuation and capitalization.



9. Evaluate

- Decide what are the strengths and weaknesses.
- Learn for next time.

8. Polish & Publish

- Study the rubric.
- Revise for the grand finale.
- Publish and share with readers.





Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
1	Introduction Welcome to Writers in Residence! Spotlight on Christian Writers Study infographics (pages xl–xlili).	Intro to Unit 1 Discuss “Meet Bill Myers.” Read “Intro to Unit 1.” Study the rubric.	Module 1 Writer’s Questions –1.5	Module 1 1.6 – 1.9
2	Module 1 1.10 – 1.13	Module 1 1.14 – Checklist 1	Module 2 Writer’s Questions –2.3	Module 2 2.4 – 2.7
3	Module 2 2.8	Module 2 2.9 – 2.11	Module 2 2.12 – Checklist 2	Module 3 Writer’s Questions – 3.6
4	Module 3 3.7 – 3.10	Module 3 Do 3.11 over the next week. 3.12 – Checklist 3	Module 4 Writer’s Questions – 4.5	Module 4 4.6 – 4.8
5	Module 4 4.9 – 4.10	Module 4 Finish 3.11. 4.11 – Checklist 4	Intro to Unit 2 Discuss “Meet Amy Green.” Read “Intro to Unit 2.” Study the rubric.	Module 5 Writer’s Questions – 5.4
6	Module 5 5.5 – 5.7	Module 5 5.8 – 5.10	Module 5 5.11 – 5.12	Module 5 5.13 – Checklist 5
7	Module 6 Writer’s Questions – 6.4	Module 6 6.5 – 6.7	Module 6 6.8 – 6.11	Module 6 6.12 – Checklist 6



Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
8	Module 7 Writer's Questions - 7.3	Module 7 7.4 - 7.5	Module 7 7.6 - 7.9 Do 7.8 over the next week.	Module 7 7.10 - Checklist 7
9	Module 8 Writer's Questions - 8.5	Module 8 8.6 - 8.9	Module 8 8.10 - 8.11	Module 8 Finish 7.8. 8.12 - Checklist 8
10	Intro to Unit 3 Discuss "Meet Irene Howat." Read "Intro to Unit 3." Study the rubric.	Module 9 Writer's Questions - 9.3	Module 9 9.4 - 9.5 Start 9.6.	Module 9 9.6 - 9.9
11	Module 9 9.10 - Checklist 9	Module 10 Writer's Questions - 10.3	Module 10 10.4 - 10.5	Interviews
12	Interviews	Module 10 10.6 - 10.9	Module 10 10.10 - 10.12	Module 10 10.13 - Checklist 10
13	Module 11 Writer's Questions - 11.5	Module 11 11.6 - 11.8	Module 11 11.9 - 11.10	Module 11 11.11 - Checklist 11
14	Module 12 Writer's Questions - 12.5	Module 12 12.6 - 12.7	Module 12 12.8	Module 12 12.9 - 12.10
15	Module 12 Do 12.11 over the next week. 12.12 - Checklist 12	Intro to Unit 4 Discuss "Meet Jason Lethcoe." Read "Intro to Unit 4." Study the rubric.	Module 13 Writer's Questions - 13.4	Module 13 13.5 - 13.8



Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
16	Module 13 13.9 - 13.10	Module 13 Finish 12.11. 13.11 - Checklist 13	Module 14 Writer's Questions - 14.3	Module 14 14.4 - 14.5
17	Module 14 14.6 - 14.7	Module 14 14.8 - 14.9	Module 14 14.10 - 14.11	Module 14 14.12 - Checklist 14
18	Module 15 Writer's Questions - 15.1	Module 15 15.2 - 15.5	Module 15 15.6 - 15.8	Module 15 15.9 - Checklist 15
19	Module 16 Writer's Questions - 16.4	Module 16 16.5 - 16.6	Module 16 16.7 - 16.9	Module 16 16.10 - 16.11
20	Module 16 16.12	Module 16 Do 16.13 over the next week. 16.14 - Checklist 16	Intro to Unit 5 Discuss "Meet Amy Parker." Read "Intro to Unit 5." Study the rubric.	Module 17 Writer's Questions - 17.3
21	Module 17 17.4 - 17.6	Module 17 17.7	Module 17 17.8 - 17.9	Module 17 17.10 - 17.11
22	Module 17 Finish 16.13. 17.11 - Checklist 17	Module 18 Writer's Questions - 18.3	Module 18 18.4 - 18.7	Module 18 18.8 - 18.10
23	Module 18 18.11 - 18.12	Module 18 18.12 - Checklist 18	Module 19 Writer's Questions - 19.3	Module 19 19.3 - 19.7
24	Module 19 19.7 - 19.10	Module 19 19.11 - Checklist 19	Module 20 Writer's Questions - 20.4	Module 20 20.5 - 20.7

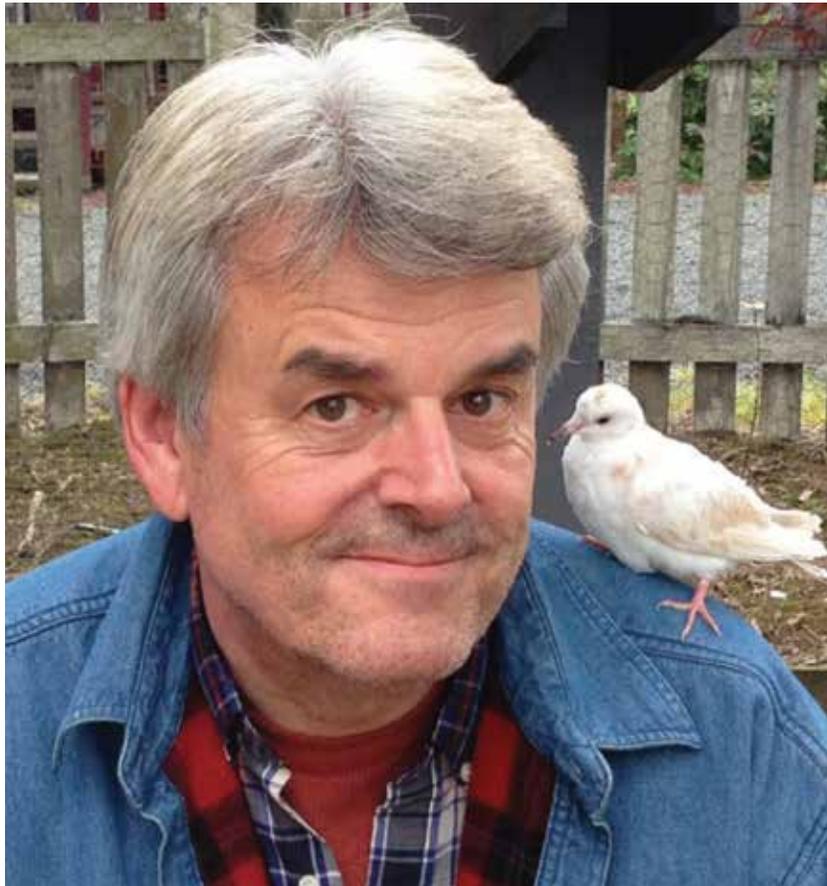


Suggested Daily Schedule

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
25	Module 20 20.8 – 20.9	Module 20 20.10 – 20.11	Module 20 20.12	Module 20 20.12
26	Module 20 Do 20.13 over the next week. 20.14 – Checklist 20	Intro to Unit 6 Discuss “Meet Phil Vischer.” Read “Intro to Unit 6.” Study the rubric.	Module 21 Writer’s Questions – 21.4	Module 21 21.5 – 21.7
27	Module 21 21.8 – 21.9	Module 21 Finish 20.13. 21.10 – 21.11	Module 21 21.12	Module 21 21.13 – Checklist 21
28	Module 22 Writer’s Questions – 22.4	Module 22 22.5 – 22.6	Module 22 22.7 – 22.9	Module 22 22.10 – 22.11
29	Module 22 22.11	Module 22 22.12 – Checklist 22	Module 23 Writer’s Questions – 23.4	Module 23 23.5 – 23.7
30	Module 23 23.8 – 23.10	Module 23 23.11 – Checklist 23	Module 24 Writer’s Questions – 24.4	Module 24 24.5 – 24.7
31	Module 24 24.8 – 24.9	Module 24 24.10 – 24.11	Module 24 24.11	Module 24 Do 24.12 over the next week. 24.13 – Checklist 24
32	Final Review	Final Review	Final Review	Final Review



meet Bill Myers



Bill Myers is a best-selling author, screenwriter, and director who has won over sixty national and international awards. He is best known for his children's McGee and Me DVD and book series, which has sold 4.5 million copies and has been aired in more than eighty countries. Bill has written, directed, and done voice work for Focus on the Family's *Adventures in Odyssey* radio series and is the voice of Jesus in Zondervan's NIV Audio Bible.

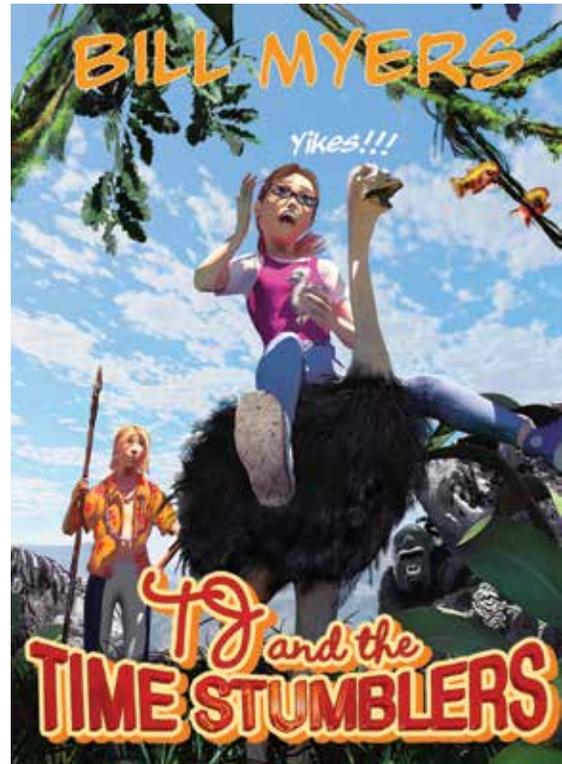


Q: Did you enjoy writing as a kid?

A: I never gave writing any thought. I was too busy in sports to spend much time writing. It never interested me, and reading didn't interest me either. However, in junior high, someone gave me a modern-day version of the New Testament, and I remember reading that and going, "Wow, this is incredible!" I'd sneak off to my room and read the Bible. I was trying to be macho and cool with my jock friends, but I couldn't wait to get home and see what Jesus would do next.

Q: So how did you become a writer?

A: It all came about when I was eighteen years old. I had made a promise to the Lord that I'd always say yes to Him. I had only seen three movies in my life at that time (*Pinocchio*, *The Parent Trap*, and *Pollyanna*). I was sitting in a theater freshman year watching *The Godfather*. I left the theater numb, struck by the power that there is in storytelling. I told God that He should get His people into storytelling, since there is so much power in it to get people's attention. Most of my life I had wanted to be a dentist. I had my life all planned out, but this quiet, inner direction was saying, "Didn't you promise to always say yes to me?" After six



weeks of arguing, I changed my major to filmmaking.

Q: How did you go from the decision to obey God's direction to becoming a well-known writer and filmmaker?

A: First I wrote the world's worst TV show. Then I wrote another one and no one wanted to buy it, then I wrote another one and still no one wanted to buy it. Then a publisher back East heard there was a famous Christian writer in Hollywood, so he called and asked if I would write a book for them. I hung up, wrote the world's worst book, wrote another one, and they bought it. That was 120 books ago.



I developed my skills in front of the public, making mistake after mistake.

Q: What is your normal writing routine?

A: I write six days a week. I'm really structured. It's the only way for me to get a book written. The first couple of hours, I hang out with the Lord—reading Scripture, adoring Him, singing to Him. I keep a notebook in my back pocket and jot down ideas that come while I'm doing that. Then I work for two hours and take a break. I work for another two hours, take a break, work for another two hours, and then take another break. In the first two hours, I rewrite what I wrote the day before. In the second set, I write fresh material—about one thousand words. In the third set, I rewrite what I rewrote yesterday. I leapfrog like that until a book is completed.

Q: Where do you write?

A: I turned my garage into an office and blew out the entire back wall to make French doors. I keep the doors open almost all year round. (I live in

southern California.) Behind my house, I have a park with waterfalls that I've been building over the years. It doesn't matter, though, because I'm not there anyway—I'm in my imagination, where the story is taking place.

Q: Where do you get your ideas?

A: They all come from my relationship with Christ. I don't hear audible words or see burning rosebushes. My ideas come out of Scripture reading, times of worship, or sometimes seeing a truth that people aren't paying attention to. I wonder, "How can I wrap this truth up in a story that hasn't been read before, so that people who read the story will get the truth and not even know it?"

I wonder, "How can I wrap this truth up in a story that hasn't been read before, so that people who read the story will get the truth and not even know it?"

I try to reveal some truth about God that we have forgotten or have been misrepresenting. That's the fingerprint I hope to leave on my work; I want it to be engaging and page-turning and original, but underneath, I want there to be something of eternal value.



Q: What advice do you have for young writers?

A: This business of saying yes to God really, really works. Regardless of what you want to do, if you make that commitment to say yes to Him, Christ will take you to places you never dreamed you'd go. It might not always be easy, but it'll be an adventure. He has bigger things planned for us than we do! I have skills I wouldn't have known about if I had pursued my original dream. I would never have wound up doing this if I was doing things my way. It is not something I initially planned, but it just came from being obedient.

UNIT 1

Introduction

When I Was Young

This unit begins our study of the **traits** of good writing. It also introduces some of the terminology we use to talk about writing. As you work through the assignments in *Writers in Residence* and learn new concepts and strategies for your writing, remember that the goal is always progress, not perfection.

I Remember

In this opening unit, you will craft sentences about some of your favorite childhood memories. To help you focus your sentences, you will write about memories that come from one specific place. The children's picture book *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant is used as a model for these memory sentences.

During the drafting and revising process of this writing assignment, you will learn how action verbs, common and proper nouns, and capitalization help readers clearly picture the events you write about. You will also learn two organizational strategies (chronological and topical order) you might use to arrange your memory sentences. Throughout the modules devoted to this assignment, you will share the drafts of your memory sentences with others and incorporate the feedback you receive into the final drafts of your sentences. These are all important steps of the writing process.

Once you decide upon the final version of your memory sentences, you will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your writing with the following **rubric**. Take a look at it now. It will give you a preview of all the things you are about to learn in this unit. Sometimes writers also ask readers to use a rubric to give them clear and important feedback. In the appendix you



Use the checklist at the end of each module to keep track of your progress.

Rubric – a special checklist for evaluating or grading writing or other projects.



will find **REVIEWER'S RUBRIC 3.9**, which your readers can use to give you feedback after you complete this assignment.

Rubric Point System:

5 points – This is the best I've ever done.

4 points – This is a strength in this piece.

3 points – I improved here in this assignment.

2 points – I remembered to pay attention to this.

1 point – I need to improve in this area.

Highlighted words are defined in the glossary in the back of this book.

Apprenticeship – learning a trade, art, or calling by practical experience under skilled workers.

Rubric for "When I Was Young"	
Traits of Good Writing	Points Earned
Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wrote about just one place. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My memories are specific and vivid. 	
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My sentences are in chronological or topical order. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I like the way the order of my sentences makes pictures in my mind. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My readers like the way I have organized my sentences. 	
Word Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All my nouns are as specific as they can be. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have used vigorous verbs to describe the action. 	
Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have capitalized all the proper nouns and the first word of each sentence. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have remembered to put a period at the end of each sentence. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have checked to make sure all my words are spelled correctly. 	
Total	

Unit 1: 50 points possible

Are you ready to get your **apprenticeship** underway? Then roll up your sleeves and let the writing begin.

When I Was Young (I Remember)

Writer's Questions

Where can I get ideas to write about?
How can I make the action in my stories more exciting?

1.1 The Assignment: When I Was Young

- ☆ Collect some of your favorite memories from your childhood. (Module 1)
- ☆ Sharpen them into images as vivid as a photograph. (Modules 1 and 2)
- ☆ Organize them in a special way that shows readers your powerful memories. (Module 3)
- ☆ Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your writing using **RUBRIC 3.9**. (Module 3)

1.2 Digging Up Memories

We're going to start this unit by digging for treasure. That's right! We're going on a treasure hunt, so grab your gear. Our destination might surprise you, though. We're headed inside—inside your mind, that is. And what is the treasure we are after? We're digging up memories. We need a pile of those precious gems before we can start crafting a tale that will entertain and delight our readers.

Sneak Peek

In this module you will learn:

- Writers get many of their ideas from childhood memories.
- Writers use vigorous verbs to make the action in their sentences specific and vivid.



1.3 Fresh Ideas from Old Memories

Does it surprise you to learn that writers get many of their ideas from their own memories? Think of your mind as a huge attic filled with a lot of interesting stuff you've probably forgotten about. When writers are looking for fresh ideas, they often start by rummaging through their old memories. We're going to do what real writers do because you're a real writer as well. You're just a little younger and still learning how writers get their best ideas flowing. But we will change that shortly because the Writers in Residence series is all about learning to use the tools of the trade your favorite authors use to create stories that readers want to read.



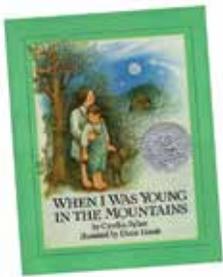
WRITER'S TOOLBOX

Writers get fresh ideas from their memories.

1.4 Expert Model

As an inspiration for your own collection of childhood memories, let's take a look at one writer's memories from her own childhood. Have you ever read *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant? (If you have a copy of this book, read it again to give you more ideas for your own collection of memories.)

In this book, Rylant recalls specific images of times spent with her grandparents in their mountain home while she was growing up. Here are a few excerpts:



EXPERT MODEL

When I was young in the mountains, Grandfather came home in the evening covered with the black dust of a coal mine.

When I was young in the mountains, Grandmother spread the table with hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra.

When I was young in the mountains, we sat on the porch swing in the evenings, and Grandfather sharpened my pencils with his pocketknife. Grandmother sometimes shelled beans and sometimes braided my hair.



1.5 Panning for Gold

For this assignment, you will arrange some of your own childhood memories into vivid sentences just like Rylant's.

Try using some of these ideas to help you bring those old memories to the surface of your mind:

1. Look at old photographs of your family and of places you've been.
2. Visit a grandparent's house or another special place you may want to write about.
3. Talk with a parent, your siblings, or your friends about their favorite childhood memories.
4. Read *When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant.
5. Close your eyes and picture yourself in some of the childhood places from your memories. What colors can you recall? What sounds? What smells? How did you feel?

Now choose just one place to write about. Is there one place where most of your favorite memories took place? Or perhaps there are several places where the memories you like the best occurred. Choose the place you find *most interesting*. Interest will make your brain come alive with powerful memories that are rich in descriptive details. This will help you write vivid and specific sentences.



WRITER'S TOOLBOX

Writers let their interests point them to the topics they write about.

YOUR TURN 

My one Special Place

Directions:

Write the name of the special place from your childhood that you find most interesting. All your memory sentences should be about this place.



1.6 Gather Your Best Ideas

Now that you have settled on a place to write about, it is time to gather all the descriptive details you can remember about it so you have plenty of memories to select from for your memory sentences.

Directions:

- ☆ Use the strategies in **1.5 PANNING FOR GOLD** again to help you recall specific events and experiences that occurred in that one special place you've decided to write about.
- ☆ Ask a parent or a sibling to help you remember some of the details as well. Most writers talk to others about their ideas *a lot*. Did you know that? Writers have a lot of help writing their stories.



WRITER'S TOOLBOX

Writers talk with others a lot about their writing ideas.

1.7 Memory Chart

Directions: Use the memory chart to collect the memories that you recall from using the strategies in **1.5 PANNING FOR GOLD**. Remember, all your memories must come from the same place.

Memory Chart		
Favorite Place <i>Auntie Vera's cottage in the Pennsylvania wilds</i>		
Favorite Person or People	Favorite Things You Did with Them	Descriptive Details You Remember (colors, sounds, smells, feelings)
<i>Auntie Vera</i>	<i>blackberry picking in the field trips for water reading by the oil lamps sending letters hymn sings at the little white church</i>	<i>her rough hands pail, pans, buckets, and jugs putting on Grandpa's big boots, early in the morning black bear in the road long hot trip in the car</i>
<i>Great-Grandma</i>	<i>feeding the kittens learning to darn sitting on the porch at night looking at the Milky Way seeing the northern lights</i>	<i>clanging spoon on pail to call them handmade quilts on my bed sleeping with the window open</i>

STUDENT SAMPLE



Memory Chart		
Favorite Place		
Favorite Person or People	Favorite Things You Did with Them	Descriptive Details You Remember (colors, sounds, smells, feelings)

Continued on next page »



Memory Chart		
Favorite Person or People	Favorite Things You Did with Them	Descriptive Details You Remember (colors, sounds, smells, feelings)



1.8 Study the Pattern

Once you have a lot of descriptive details about your favorite place, you are ready to put your memories together into sentences that follow the pattern Rylant uses in her book.

Let's look at two of Rylant's sentences:

When I was young in the mountains, Grandfather came home in the evening covered with the black dust of a coal mine.

When I was young in the mountains, Grandmother spread the table with hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra.

EXPERT MODEL

Do you see how Rylant built her sentences? We can break each sentence into two parts.

Mention of a Place	Person, Action, and Description
When I was young in the mountains,	Grandfather came home in the evening covered with the black dust of a coal mine.
When I was young in the mountains,	Grandmother spread the table with hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra.

Go back to **1.4 EXPERT MODEL** and note that all of Rylant's examples follow that pattern. Now that you know how her sentences are built, you can write sentences that follow the same pattern.



Here are some examples:

EXAMPLE

When I was young in Perry, my mom brought thermoses of steamy hot drinks to November football games.

When I was young in the country, at night Great-Grandma put the blankets snugly around me and opened the window to let in the night air.

When I was young on Lansdale Farm, my father showed us newborn kittens hidden in the bales of hay in the barn.

Now it is your turn to write memory sentences that follow the pattern.

Draft: When I Was Young

When I was young on Lake Erie, we spent our summer fishing in the bay.

When I was young on Lake Erie, Keri and I went ice skating when the lake froze over.

STUDENT SAMPLE

1.9 Write Your Memory Sentences

Directions:

- ☆ On the next two pages, write some of your fondest memories about the people, places, and things you remember from your special place.
- ☆ Use the same sentence pattern as Rylant, but replace the word *mountains* with a word or group of words that best describes the specific place where all of these memories took place.
- ☆ For now, list the memories as individual sentences. You will organize them later.
- ☆ Write at least ten sentences in the white spaces and leave the blue boxes blank to use later.

When I Was Young (I Remember)



Draft: When I Was Young

A large rectangular area with horizontal light blue and white stripes, intended for writing a draft.

Continued on next page »



Draft: When I Was Young

A large rectangular area with horizontal light blue and white stripes, intended for writing a draft.



1.10 Vigorous Verbs

A **verb** is a word that shows action or a state of being. **Action verbs** are the words in the sentence that name the action (for example, *run*, *speak*, *read*, and *think*). Writers make their sentences more interesting and powerful by paying close attention to the action words they use. They choose verbs that describe the action as precisely as possible. We call these **vigorous verbs** because they make the action in the story crystal clear in the reader's mind.



Parts of speech – the basic kinds of words in English grammar.

Notice the verbs Cynthia Rylant uses in her sentences in **1.4 EXPERT MODEL**:

sharpened

spread

braided

shelled

Parts of Speech

noun

verb

adjective

adverb

pronoun

preposition

conjunction

interjection

Example of Weak Verb	Example of Vigorous Verb
Instead of writing, "Grandmother put hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra on the table,"	Rylant wrote, "Grandmother spread the table with hot corn bread, pinto beans and fried okra."
Instead of writing, "Grandmother fixed my hair,"	Rylant wrote, "Grandmother braided my hair."

Can you see that Rylant's verb choices make her grandmother's actions precise and vivid?



Directions: Study the examples below and then find more specific, vigorous verbs to use in place of the general verbs *run*, *hit*, and *cut*. You may use a **thesaurus** to help you. When you have finished, compare your answers with the sample answers in **ANSWER KEY 1.10**.

General Action	More Specific Action
walk	<i>amble, creep, hike, hurry, limp, saunter, stalk, stroll</i>
say	<i>whisper, shout, admit, cry, answer, agree, stutter, scream</i>
make	<i>arrange, assemble, bake, build, create, invent, sew, shape</i>
run	
hit	
cut	

Thesaurus – a special dictionary that catalogues words with similar meanings (called **synonyms**) and words with opposite meanings (called **antonyms**).

1.11 Practice

Directions: Replace the red verb in each sentence from *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor with a more vigorous verb that describes the action. You can see the actual verbs Taylor used in these sentences in **ANSWER KEY 1.11**.

1. Like silent, hungry sharks that swim in the darkness of the sea, the German submarines **came** in the middle of the night.

Replace with: _____

2. One German sub **was** even **seen** off Willemstad at dawn.

Replace with: _____



3. I **went** down to the old fort with Henrik van Boven, my Dutch friend who was also eleven.

Replace with: _____

4. I **had been** there many times with Henrik and other boys when we were a few years younger.

Replace with: _____

5. They once **attacked** the island, I knew, long ago.

Replace with: _____

6. They **sent** us away, telling us to go home.

Replace with: _____

7. An army officer **got** out of his truck and told us all to leave the Queen Emma bridge.

Replace with: _____

8. He **said**, "Don't you know they could shoot a torpedo up here and kill you all?"

Replace with: _____

9. We suddenly became frightened and **went** home to the Scharloo section where we lived.

Replace with: _____

10. My mother got very upset. She **took** my shoulder and shook it.

Replace with: _____



WRITER'S TOOLBOX

Writers choose vigorous verbs to help their readers picture the action exactly as the writers imagine it.



1.12 Vocabulary: Walk This Way

Directions: Study the action verbs below that describe how a person might move from place to place. With a partner, practice walking according to each action verb's definition.

1. **amble:** (v.) to walk at a leisurely relaxed pace
2. **creep:** (v.) to crawl with the body near to or touching the ground
3. **dodge:** (v.) to avoid or attempt to avoid (an object) by moving suddenly
4. **hobble:** (v.) to walk with a lame awkward movement
5. **meander:** (v.) to follow a winding course
6. **prance:** (v.) to swagger or strut
7. **saunter:** (v.) to walk in a casual manner; stroll
8. **stagger:** (v.) to walk unsteadily as if about to fall
9. **stalk:** (v.) to follow or approach (game, prey, etc.) stealthily and quietly
10. **stride:** (v.) to walk with long regular or measured paces, as in haste
11. **scurry:** (v.) to move about or proceed hurriedly
12. **trudge:** (v.) to walk or plod heavily or wearily

(Collins English Dictionary)

1.13 The Sandbox

Did you have a sandbox when you were younger? What did you enjoy doing there? In the Writers in Residence series, the Sandbox is a place where you can play around with words and try different tips and tricks without worrying about keeping everything you write correct and organized. In this section, you will have a chance to mess around with vigorous verbs.

First, study this example of an exciting action scene that shows you how vigorous verbs help readers picture the action. Some of the vigorous action verbs are printed in red for you.



In this excerpt from Eoin Colfer's novel *Airman*, two friends named Conor and Isabella find themselves at the top of a castle tower, which happens to be exploding.

The tower **shook** again; several floor blocks **rattled** in their housings, then **dropped** into the apartment below. Orange and blue flames **surged** through the holes, and the snap and grind of breaking glass and twisting metal **frightened** the two children. "Up on the wall," said Conor urgently. "The floor is falling."

For once, Isabella did not argue. She accepted Conor's hand and followed him to the lip of the parapet.

"The floor is a foot thick," he explained, **shouting** over the roar of the flames. "The parapet is four feet thick. It won't break."

The explosions went off below like cannon fire, each one **issuing** a different odor, a different color smoke. The fumes were noxious, and Conor presumed his own face was as green as Isabella's. It doesn't matter if the parapet holds, he realized. The flames will get us long before then.

To Isabella and Conor it felt as though the entire world shook. The stairwell **spewed** forth flame and smoke as though a dragon **lurked** below; and from the courtyard came the screams of islanders as chunks of the tower **crashed** down from above.

I need to get us out of this place, thought Conor. No one else can save us, not even Father.

There was no way to walk down, not through the inferno below. There was only one way down, and that was to fly.

(pages 31–32)

EXPERT MODEL

When I Was Young (I Remember)



A large rectangular area with a dashed purple border, containing 18 horizontal lines for writing.



1.14 Revise: Verbs

Directions: Now study the sentences you drafted in **1.9 WRITE YOUR MEMORY SENTENCES**. Underline the verbs you have used to describe the action in each of your memories. Find at least five places where you can make the action more specific by replacing the verbs in your draft with more vigorous verbs. Write the new verbs in the space above the sentence.

You may discover that you must **revise** some of your sentences in order to better describe the action. A sample of the draft paper you used in **1.9 WRITE YOUR MEMORY SENTENCES** is provided in **APPENDIX 1.9**. Ask a parent or teacher to make a copy of this page for you. The examples below show you what to do. Notice how changing the action verb to a more vigorous verb sharpens the image of the action in your mind.

Revise – to improve or alter. Originally, *revise* meant to see in a new way.

EXAMPLE

When I was young in Perry, my mom ~~brought~~^{toted} thermoses of steamy hot drinks to November football games.

When I was young in the country, at night Great-Grandma ~~put~~^{tucked} the blankets snugly around me and ~~opened~~^{cracked} the window to let in the night air.

When I was young on Lansdale Farm, my father ~~showed~~^{surprised with} us newborn kittens hidden in the bales of hay in the barn.



1.15 Word Sleuth

Have you ever created a bug collection or perhaps a stamp collection? You can learn a lot from collecting and organizing things. That's why *Writers in Residence* has a place for your **WORD COLLECTION** in the appendix. Right now those pages are blank, and they are waiting for you to fill them up. What kinds of words do you think writers like to collect?

Most writers are always on the lookout for two types of words:

- ☆ new words they want to try out in their writing
- ☆ words they often misspell

What new words did you come across in this module that you want to keep in mind for your writing projects? Are there certain words that you can't remember how to spell? Or have you learned some interesting new words in your other school subjects? It doesn't matter where they come from. What matters is that you are always on the lookout for new words to collect and organize so you can use them in the future.

Directions: Go over your work from this module and add any words you want to remember how to spell correctly to your **WORD COLLECTION**. Also add any new words you have learned in this module or have come across in your reading that you want to use in your own writing.

1.16 Revisit: Writer's Questions

Directions: Before you move on to the next module, revisit the **WRITER'S QUESTIONS** from the beginning of this module. Based upon what you have learned in this module, how would you answer the questions? Talk about your answers with a parent, teacher, or writing coach.

- ☆ Where can I get ideas to write about?
- ☆ How can I make the action in my stories more exciting?

What matters is that you are always on the lookout for new words to collect and organize so you can use them in the future.



Checklist for Module 1

Directions: When you have completed a task, make a ✓ in the “Done” column. Ask a parent, teacher, or writing coach to award you points for each task using the checklist point system. Fill in the points you have earned on the **APPRENTICE LOG** in the appendix.

Checklist Point System:

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or writing coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
1.5 Panning for Gold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write the name of the special place from your childhood you are most interested in writing about. 		
1.6 Gather Your Best Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the strategies in 1.5 PANNING FOR GOLD to help you recall specific events and experiences that occurred in your special place. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about your memories with others to help you generate lots of details about your special place. 		
1.7 Memory Chart <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the memory chart to collect the memories from your special place. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check to make sure your memories came from one place. 		
1.9 Write Your Memory Sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write at least ten memory sentences. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Cynthia Rylant’s sentence pattern from <i>When I Was Young in the Mountains</i>. 		
1.10 Vigorous Verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List more specific verbs for <i>run</i>, <i>hit</i>, and <i>cut</i>. 		



Tasks	Done ✓	Points Earned
1.11 Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace the red verbs with more vigorous verbs. 		
1.12 Vocabulary: Walk This Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice the different manners of walking on the vocabulary list. 		
1.13 The Sandbox <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invent a short story about a fictional version of yourself as an action hero. Create an archenemy too. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a lot of vigorous verbs to describe the action. Include some from the vocabulary list in 1.12. 		
1.14 Revise: Verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underline the verbs you used to describe the action in each of your memory sentences. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace at least five verbs in your memory sentences with more specific, vigorous verbs. 		
1.15 Word Sleuth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add spelling words and new words to YOUR WORD COLLECTION. 		
1.16 Revisit: Writer's Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss your answers to the WRITER'S QUESTIONS from the beginning of the module with a parent, teacher, or writing coach. 		
Total		

Checklist Point System:

1–6 points may be awarded by a parent, teacher, or writing coach for each task completed. Here are the recommended guidelines:

- 6** – exemplary in quality *and* effort
- 5** – exemplary in either quality *or* effort
- 4** – acceptable in quality *and* effort
- 3** – acceptable in either quality *or* effort
- 2** – needs improvement in quality *and* effort
- 1** – incomplete

Module 1: 96 points possible