

WORDSMITH APPRENTICE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Wordsmith Apprentice was created with two basic purposes in mind:

- 1) To supplement and apply grammatical principles. Many students learn punctuation, parts of speech, and basic sentence structure as workbook "exercises" but don't necessarily see the relevance to actual writing. Every grammatical principle taught in *Wordsmith Apprentice* will be applied to several unusual exercises and at least one writing project, reinforcing the idea that there's a reason we learn this stuff!
- 2) To introduce the student to several types and purposes of writing, in an imaginative way that will create enthusiasm for the subject. The newspaper theme provides a practical, relevant format for exploring the many ways we use the written word.

PART ONE: NOUNS, VERBS AND SENTENCES

Nouns

Principles taught: how to recognize nouns by "noun markers" (articles); the difference between proper and common nouns; the importance of specific nouns over general ones.

Projects: "For sale" ads, cinquain and other types of "form" poetry

Verbs

Principles taught: the difference between action, helping and linking verbs; preferring vivid action verbs

Projects: "Help wanted" ads, action poetry, writing definitions

Sentence structure

Principles taught: the two basic sentence forms; subject and predicate; compounding; the four sentence types

Projects: picture captions; invitations; letters; newspaper headlines

PART TWO: MODIFIERS

Adjectives and adverbs

Principles taught: how to recognize adjectives and adverbs and how they are used

Projects: games and word puzzles; diamante poems

Prepositions

Principles taught: what prepositions are and how they are used

Projects: expanded picture captions, display ads, real-estate ads, travel writing, book reviews

PART THREE: ORGANIZING AND REPORTING

Paragraphs

Principles taught: recognizing topic sentences and sentences that don't belong; good organization

Projects: recipe writing, household hints, writing synopses for movies and TV shows, organizing a contest

Reporting

Principles taught: the five "W's" (who, what, when, where, why), plus "how"

Projects: fictional and actual news stories

Dialogue

Principles taught: what dialogue is and how it is represented on paper

Projects: comic strips

Introductory sentences and paragraphs

Principles taught: what makes an interesting "hook"

Projects: writing original articles from pictures; interviews

Fact and Opinion

Principles taught: the difference between reporting and opining; steps to writing an opinion piece

Project: editorials

WORDSMITH SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Wordsmith is written for young people who are just beginning to explore their experiences, feelings and responses. The purpose of the book is to develop confidence in self-expression, first by learning some basic techniques of effective writing, and second by discovering that their own experience contains plenty of material to write about. Some of the topics that *Wordsmith Apprentice* touches upon are addressed more systematically here. Parts One and Two contain exercises and short assignments to reinforce the principles taught. In Part Three, the student moves beyond exercises into longer assignments, developed according to an orderly process of thinking, organizing, writing, evaluating, and re-writing. Every chapter includes a "Just Imagine" exercise or assignment, where the student is encouraged to apply what she has just learned to an imaginary situation.

PART ONE: WORD GAMES

Nouns

Nouns as a major "building block" of language; preferring concrete and specific nouns over general ones; proofreading.

Verbs

Verbs as the other "building block"; action and linking verbs; preferring strong action verbs over weak or linking verbs; using verbs to show emotion.

Adverbs

The function of adverbs; preferring strong verbs over weak verb/adverb combinations

Adjectives

The function and variety of adjectives; the difference between descriptive and qualitative adjectives; over-use of adjectives

Prepositions

The function of prepositions: to turn nouns into modifiers; the flexibility of prepositional phrases

Pronouns

How pronouns are used; the pronoun-antecedent connection; avoiding confusion with pronouns

PART TWO: BUILDING STRONGER SENTENCE

Basic Sentence Structure

Subjects and predicates; fragments

Successful Sentence Construction

Common "weak" constructions and how to avoid them (particularly "it has" and "there is"; sentence transformation techniques; preferring active voice over passive

Making Connections

Coordinating conjunctions; subordinating conjunctions; semi-colons

Combinations

Combining sentences through appositives, relative pronouns, relative clauses, participles and participial phrases

PART THREE: NOW WE'RE WRITING!

Exploring Sensory Experience

The importance of the senses in connecting writer and reader; writing sensory poems

Figures of Speech

What similes, metaphors and personifications are; how they are used

Special Places

The use of sensory impressions in describing a place; first steps in revision

Describing a Person

"Framing" a person at a particular time and place; descriptions of strangers and of people you know well

Narrative Writing I - Sequence and Detail

Telling events in order; the use of sensory images and details

Narrative Writing II - Focus

The importance of narrowing thoughts and impressions to a particular event; finding the focus and holding it; the difference between narrative and summary; writing about personal experiences; advanced revision

Dialogue

What dialogue and how it is indicated; using dialogue to indicate character traits, add interest, and move the narrative along; speech tags and when to use them; interviews; radio plays

Point of View

First, second and third person; imagining and including other points of view in personal narratives

Story

The difference between narrative and plot; basic story structure; re-interpreting personal experience as a story; effective opening sentences and paragraphs

Final assignment: incorporating word choice, strong sentence constructions, effective organization, sensory detail, dialogue, focus, and point of view, shape an incident from your life into a short story.

APPENDICES: How to Proofread; How to Revise; Action Verb List; Student examples; Four Review Quizzes

WORDSMITH CRAFTSMAN SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The purpose of *Wordsmith Craftsman* is to prepare students for college and beyond, with an emphasis on writing and thinking skills that will be useful to them for the rest of their lives. The approach is a bit more structured and serious than the other two books, but still friendly and accessible. High school is the target grade level, but *Wordsmith Craftsman* can also serve as a complete college freshman composition course.

PART ONE: WRITING EVERY DAY

Take a Note

How to make notes to yourself and organize your time

Study Notes and Outlines

The skill of note-taking and why it's important; taking notes from verbal and written sources; outlining

Personal Letters

General outlines for thank-you notes, keeping-in-touch letters (and e-mails), fan letters, letters of support and letters of apology; *do's* and *don't's* for each type

Business letters

Business letter etiquette and form; letters of complaint and request

Summaries

What summaries are and how they are used; how to write a summary

Business Reports

Writing in the business world, e.g. proposals, feasibility studies, market research; how to conceive, organize, and present a plan

PART TWO: LANGUAGE POWER

Paragraphs

Basic principles of the paragraph; four paragraph types; eight models of paragraph organization

Writing Techniques That Really Work!

Using more and better verbs; preferring personal to impersonal forms; being specific; preferring active over passive; showing as preferred to telling; avoiding wordiness and

clichés

Steps Toward a Personal Writing Style

Arranging words for emphasis; using transitional words and phrases; "loaded" words and selective detail; honesty in writing

PART THREE: THE ESSAY

Introduction to Essays

Basic essay structure; how to brainstorm ideas to write about; determining an essay topic and defining a thesis

Writing the Essay, Step By Step

The writing process (think, organize, write, evaluate, rewrite)

The Descriptive Essay

Determining a focus; using sensory details

The Narrative Essay

Organizing events in sequence; keeping the focus; writing introductory paragraphs

The Expository Essay

Basic research and sources of information; using oral sources; using personal experience as an expository source (e.g., travel writing)

A Word About Research Papers

Two types of research papers; the most critical step: choosing a workable thesis (Note: *Wordsmith Craftsman* does not contain detailed information on how to write a research paper, but the material on research in the Expository section will give the student a head start in this area.)

The Critical Essay

What "criticism" is, in this context; positive and negative criteria for judging a work; pitfalls of review writing; the difference between a review and a critical essay.

The Art of Persuasion

Three types of assertions and how they are defended; the four elements of persuasion; how to organize an argument; determining common ground; the use and misuse of emotion; writing a strong conclusion

APPENDICES: Forms for note-taking and summary-writing; answers to exercises; expanded Dewey decimal system; summaries of the steps in writing all five essay types; common fallacies of argument