

Lesson Plan for
WORDSMITH CRAFTSMAN
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Wordsmith Craftsman is best understood as a two-year program to prepare a high school student for college. But upon graduation, a student should be prepared for lifelong learning, whether or not further academics is part of the program. The study and communication skills covered in this book are essential for any line of work, as well as independent study.

Although some grammar and syntax topics are reviewed in Part Two of *Craftsman*, the focus of this book is not to teach grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Any weaknesses in these areas might need supplemental help. The purpose here is to build the skills necessary for effective written communication of various types: specifically, descriptive, expository, critical, and persuasive.

This lesson plan is intended to help teachers pace their students through the book in two school years (36 weeks per year, with two weeks off for the holidays and one for spring break). The junior and senior years are ideal, but advanced students might be capable of finishing the book during their sophomore/junior years, reserving senior year for more detailed research projects, extensive reading, and further essay writing. On the younger end, a freshman could complete Part One of *Wordsmith Craftsman* and practice the study and communication skills taught there for the rest of that year, before going on to Parts Two and Three.

The lesson plan below indicates work to be completed during the week, not day by day. At the very beginning of the program students are expected to begin taking responsibility for their own scheduling. So, although the teacher might need to help at first, students should determine what days and hours will be set aside to finish the work. Assigned tasks are indicated by bullet points.

YEAR ONE

Fall Quarter: September-November

Week 1: We start by learning to organize time. Whether the student continues to college or not, this is crucial—not just for school, but for life! Make sure the student has a notebook for scheduling, as instructed in the assignment on page 3.

- This week, read the “To the Student” Introduction (pages viii-ix) and write two discussion questions to talk about with your teacher.
- Read pages 1-3.
- Complete assignment on page 3
- Start assignment on p. 4

Week 2

- Reread pages 1-3 and go on to read pages 4-6.
- Do exercises on pages 5 and 6.
- Continue scheduling exercise on page 4.

Week 3: Note-taking is an essential study skill that can't be over-emphasized. The student might already be taking notes, but we're going to get more systematic about it. Since this is a self-directed activity, the teacher should take time during the week to make sure that notes are being made. The form on page 109 can be helpful for providing focus and building good habits. If you have a photocopier or access to one, print off a few dozen copies. If the student takes notes on the form and keeps them together in a folder or binder, it will be easy to check a few times per week until note-taking becomes a habit.

- Reread pages 4-6 and continue reading through page 8.
- Optional: Write a quiz with 6-10 questions (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or short answer) based on what you learned about note-taking on pages 2-8.
- Complete the boxed assignment on page 7.
- Schedule three readings from a non-fiction source; read and take notes on all three this week.

Week 4

- Optional: Before reviewing pages 4-8, test yourself by taking the quiz you wrote last week.
- Reread pages 4-8. Schedule three non-fiction passages to read and take notes on this week. These can be your choice or part of your assigned reading for other subjects.

Week 5: The student has been taking notes on written sources. This week, we introduce note-taking from oral sources—that is, a speaker. In college, in-class lectures typically constitute more test material than textbooks, so paying attention is crucial. But listening skills apply in all areas of life, not just college.

- Read “Oral Sources,” pages 8-10.
- Take notes from an oral source as per the first boxed assignment on page 10. You might want to start with a short presentation, such as a 10-15 minute “How-to” on YouTube.
- Take notes on at least two reading assignments.

Week 6

- Reread pages 8-10
- Schedule assignment in the second box on page 10.
- Continue taking notes on at least two readings.

Week 7

- Read “Outlining,” pages 10-11.
- Complete boxed exercise on page 11.
- Take notes on two oral presentations.

Week 8: This week we begin a section on letters. Teens may object: “But nobody writes letters these days!” That’s all the more reason to learn how to write them! Clarity is as important in informal conversation as it is anywhere else, and letter-writing is a great way to practice it. Also, even if the letter *writer* doesn’t appreciate this time-honored custom, letter-*receivers* definitely will. During the following weeks, you should find opportunities to actually send some of the letters the student will be writing.

- Reread pages 10-11 to review outlining.
- Finish outline assignment at the top of page 12.
- Read “Personal Letters” and “Thank-You Notes,” pages 12-13.
- Write (and send) one Thank-You letter and schedule three more.
- At least twice this week, take notes from a written or oral source.

Week 9

- Read “Keeping in Touch,” pages 13-15
- Write one personal letter to a friend or relative (and send it!). Schedule two more.
- At least twice this week, take notes from a written or oral source.

Week 10. Beginning this week, the student will not be specifically instructed to take notes but should continue the practice wherever needed.

- Read “The Fan Letter,” pages 15-18
- Write one fan letter and schedule one or two more.
- Read “Letters of Support,” pages 18-19.
- Write one Letter of Support, for a real or imaginary situation.

Week 11

- Read “Letters of Apology,” pages 19-20.
- Write one letter of apology for a real or imagined situation.
- Read “Business Letters,” pages 21-25.
- Write a letter of complaint *and* a letter requesting information for real or imagined situations.

Week 12. Summary writing is more challenging than it may seem. To summarize is to find the essence of a piece and either put it in your own words (*precis*) or abbreviate the author’s words (abstract). Summary writing is invaluable for grasping an argument and distilling information. Make several copies of the summary-writing form on page 110—it will be helpful both for the student and teacher.

- Read “Summaries,” pages 25-28.
- Schedule the three summary-writing exercises on page 28 for the next two weeks; write at least two of them this week.
- Write a letter requesting employment using the model on pages 24-25.
- Choose three of the five summary assignments on page 29 and schedule them for next week.

Winter Quarter: December – February

Week 13. The “Business Reports” section offers a practical, real-life exercise that could help the student with future planning and life goals. If time is limited, this could be seen as optional. Or, it could be a special project for winter break, spring break, or summer vacation.

- Reread pages 25-28 and complete the summary assignments you scheduled for this week.
- Read pages 29-31, “Business Plans”
- Choose one project from Group A and another from Group B on page 31. Write a business plan for your “A” project this week. Start gathering information for your “B” project and plan to finish it over the next four weeks.

Weeks 14 – 21. Part Two of *Wordsmith Craftsman* addresses matters of writing style. Since the material is already broken down into seven weeks on page 33, there’s no need to reproduce that information here. Of course, the student should be keeping up with note-taking for all content subjects like history and science, but it’s helpful to vary note-taking with summary writing. For example, ask for one summary per week based on part of the student’s reading. A

reading passage that's especially content-heavy should be broken into sections rather than chapters. Until the student is comfortable with the practice, use the summary-writing form on page 110 and keep completed summaries in one place for easy checking. Also, after Christmas is a great time to review Thank-You letters—and write them!

Week 21. This week we begin work on the main goal of this book: competent essay writing. This can be challenging for teachers who don't have a lot of experience with writing, because there's no answer key. The best approach, at least at the beginning, is read the material yourself and be ready to discuss areas where the student is unsure of the "right answer." Sometimes there is no right answer, so both of you can take your best guess.

- Read pages 57-62.
- Complete the exercise on page 59 and both exercises on page 61.

Week 22. This week we start on specific types of essay, beginning with what might be the easiest. If you've worked through *Wordsmith* with your student (the middle-grade book in the series), some of this material will be familiar, but worth reviewing. The process of essay-writing is broken down into five steps. The student should be accustomed to self-scheduling by now, but you might want to check and make sure adequate time is allotted for each step.

- Reread pages 57-62 and continue through page 68.
- Schedule and complete Steps One, Two, and Three toward writing a descriptive essay.

Week 23. If the student is new to revision, it might be helpful to discuss the evaluation step described on pages 66-67 and work through the essay revision together. Continue co-revising until you feel your input is no longer needed.

- Reread pages 63-68.
- Schedule and complete Steps Four and Five to finish your descriptive essay.

Week 24

- Schedule and complete all five steps of another descriptive essay.

Spring Quarter: March – May

Week 25

- Read pages 69-74, "The Narrative Essay."
- Schedule and complete Steps One, Two, and Three toward writing your own narrative essay.

Week 26

- Reread pages 69-74.
- Follow instructions a-d on page 74 to analyze the sample narrative essay.
- Schedule and complete Steps Four and Five to finish your narrative essay.

Week 27

- Schedule and complete all five steps of another narrative essay.

Week 28. Your student will probably have had experience with "Expository" essays, otherwise known as school reports or projects. This section introduces a more formal, careful approach to choosing resources, gathering information, and reporting it accurately. It's also the introductory step to writing formal research papers, which we'll get to later.

- Read—and take notes on!—pages 75-78.
- If feasible, visit your local library for the assignment on page 77.

Week 29

- Review pages 75-78.
- Schedule and complete the assignment for a short expository essay on page 78.

Week 30

- Read pages 79-81, “Writing the Expository Essay.”
- Schedule and complete Steps One, Two, and Three.

Week 31

- Reread pages 79-81.
- Schedule and complete Steps Four and Five to finish your expository essay.
- Read pages 81-82.
- Schedule and complete Step One: Choosing and interviewing an *available* oral source. If the source is not available until next week, set up an interview and write your questions.

Week 32

- Review pages 81-82 and continue up to the Assignment box on p. 83.
- Interview your oral source, if you were not able to do it last week.
- Schedule and complete Steps Two – Five to finish your expository essay.

Week 33

- Read pages 83-84
- Schedule and complete all five steps for an expository essay based on personal experience. Keep the focus on conveying information, not personal impressions (in other words, what you *learned* vs. what you *felt*).

Week 34. The assignments for these last three weeks will amount to a mini-research paper, though you don’t have to use that term!

- Schedule the steps for writing a longer expository essay (5-7 double-spaced pages), using at least two sources for your information.
- Complete Step One this week.

Week 35

- Schedule and complete Steps Two and Three of your expository essay.

Week 36

- Schedule and complete steps four and five of your expository essay.
- Take satisfaction in a job well done and enjoy your summer!

YEAR TWO

For most students, this will be junior or senior year. Seniors, especially, should be doing more work independently. The goal this year will be to develop critical judgment while refining their writing and communication skills. “The Critical Essay” will be a step in that direction and “The Persuasive” essay will hone logic and argumentative skills. The big project this year will be writing a research paper that “defends a thesis,” thus combining judgment, logic, and rhetoric.

Of course, the student will continue with note-taking, and we’ll review outlining and summary-writing in the course of the year. Also be mindful of any occasion where the student could write a personal or business letter. We’ll begin by setting some goals.

Fall Quarter, September - November

Week 1

- Review your short-term and long-range goals from last year (Assignment, page 4). Which of your one-year goals have you met, and which did you have to alter? How would you change your five- and ten-year goals?
- List three specific steps you can take to reach your five-year goal. At least one of them should be something you can do right now.
- Write two business letters connected with your goals for this year, such as requesting information about places you’d like to travel, applying for an apprenticeship, querying a specific college about their application process, asking an artist, engineering firm, or NASA about the best approach to enter their profession.
- (Optional) Write one personal letter to a friend or relative about a specific summer memory. This could also be an email.

Week 2

- Review pages 34-55.
- Choose four of the seven practice exercises on pages 55-56 to complete this week.

Week 3

- Review pages 63-68 (“The Descriptive Essay”) and complete Steps One, Two, and Three of a descriptive essay about a place or object that was especially meaningful to you this summer.

Week 4

- Complete Steps Four and Five of your descriptive essay.
- Using the summary form on page 110, write 3-4 summaries of assigned reading this week, in two different subject areas. If the reading is several pages long, or an entire chapter, break it into two or three sections.

Week 5

- Review pages 69-74 and choose one incident that occurred over the summer as the topic for a narrative essay.
- Schedule all five steps for this week.
- Complete Steps One through Five of your narrative essay.

Week 6

- Review pages 76-78.
- Complete the assignment on page 78.

Week 7. We're gearing up to begin work on an actual research paper. At the end of last year, the student should have completed a mini-research assignment, so the process shouldn't be totally unknown. This one will be longer and more formal, with bibliography and notecards. The plagiarism essay and analysis will be an introduction to identifying and citing outside sources.

- Review pages 79-84 and read pages 85-86.
- Complete the exercise on page 86

Week 8. The first step in a research paper is the most important: choosing a topic. I've seen more papers run aground here at the beginning than at any other time. A *subject* like "aviation" is far too broad, but it's a good place to start. "The history of aviation" is still too broad, but we're getting there. What about "Three spectacular failures in early aviation"? That could work, if the student can find adequate information. Some brainstorming can be very useful here, so be ready to talk it over together and develop a provisional thesis. You'll find examples of topic-to-thesis statements on pages 79 and 97-98.

- Choose a topic for an expository research paper, 6-8 pages, double-spaced. It may be based on one of your life goals ("When I go to Italy, here's what I want to see" or "How to become an electrical engineer") or any other subject of interest to you ("Bow-hunting today," "Native-American Allies in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend," "The Evolution of the Silicon Chip")
- Read a general article on the topic, possibly in Wikipedia, and write a provisional thesis sentence. (Further research may cause you to alter your thesis a bit.)
- Find four reliable sources for your paper. One of them can be the general article you already read. Of the others, one should be a published book, if appropriate.
- Write a bibliography, following the pattern under "Sources," page 112. Number your sources from 1-4—that will help with note-taking later.

Week 9. Note-taking apps like Evernote, Microsoft One Note, Apple Note, etc. are helpful and students should learn to use them, but they should also learn how to use classic 3x5 notecards. They are concrete, easy to organize, and involve the discipline of hand-writing. The standard format is below, Leave the top line blank (for now) and write the information a few lines down. If the student has made a numbered bibliography, all that's needed to attribute each note is the number of the source and page number (if it's a book). The top-line label comes last, after the notes are completed and the student has an idea of how they should be organized.

Category (added last)

Note Here:

Information not generally known

Direct quotes

Stats or timelines

Important names, dates, places, etc.

Source & page #

- Take notes from your four sources.
- Organize your notes and label the cards according to categories of information.

Week 10

- Revise your thesis statement, if necessary.
- Write an outline for your paper. See pages 10-11 to brush up on outlining.

Week 11

- Write a rough draft of the entire paper, following your outline. If you type the rough draft, you should end up with at least six pages.

Week 12

- Revise your paper, checking the content guidelines on page 80. Then go through it again and answer the style questions on page 67.
- Type or print a final copy.

Winter Quarter: December – February

Week 13. After the grind of writing an expository research paper, critical essays should be fun. After all, we get to watch movies!

- Read Pages 87-92.
- (Optional) Locate and read some movie reviews in your local paper or online.
- Choose a favorite movie to review and complete Steps One, Two, and Three for a critical essay.

Week 14

- Reread pages 87-92.
- Complete Steps Four and Five to finish your critical essay.
- Later in the week or this weekend: watch a movie you've never seen and take notes for a review (that is, a critical essay).

Week 15

- Complete all five steps for a critical essay about the movie you watched last week.
- Read pages 91-92.
- Choose a novel to review (or, if you don't like fiction, a nonfiction narrative, such as history). Preferably this is a book you've never read, but if time is limited, find a novel you've already read and skim it to refresh your memory.
- Take notes about what you like and dislike (and why!).

Week 16

- Complete Steps One, Two, and Three for a critical essay about the book you read.

Week 17

- Complete Steps Four and Five to finish your critical essay/book review.
- (Optional) Research local publications, student magazines, or educational journals or newsletters that publish reviews. Submit your review for consideration.

Week 18. This week we start on “persuasive essays.” This type of writing combines logic, reasoning, organization, style, and elements of emotion to make a case. It’s the summit of effective communication!

- Read pages 93-96.
- Complete exercises on pages 94 and 96.

Week 19

- Write two summary paragraphs. The first will summarize #1, 2, and 3 on page 94; the second will summarize forms of argument on pages 95-96. Don’t just list these; provide a brief definition of each in your own words.
- Read pages 97-105.
- Write two paragraphs about *each* of the two sample essays. The first paragraph for each will summarize the content—facts, arguments, and conclusions. The second paragraph will express your reaction: are you convinced? Why or why not? If you were already convinced, what details or arguments seemed most effective to you?

Week 20. This week the student is required to choose a workable topic and thesis for a persuasive essay. It might be a good idea to talk this over first, or at least check the thesis sentence.

- Review pages 97-101.
- Complete Steps One and Two toward your persuasive essay.

Week 21

- Reread pages 101-102
- Complete Steps Three, Four, and Five of your persuasive essay.

Week 22. This week’s opinion piece will be written for publication. The student will probably need help finding an outlet, and that may be tough. But local publications, regional magazines, and homeschool journals often reserve room for youth voices. Do a little research and be sure to follow any published guidelines. Note that publications tend to favor short articles, so the essay will probably be limited to 300 words or less. Also note: submitting a piece for publication doesn’t mean it will be published!

- Choose a current topic that’s important to you personally or that you have opinions about. Cluster and write a thesis statement for an opinion piece to be submitted for publication. The piece will be short—300 words or less.
- Determine where to submit your essay. This could be a local newspaper (as a letter to the editor or Young Voices column), a school newspaper, a magazine (print or online), other? Note any guidelines.
- Complete Steps One and Two on pages 97-101. For a short essay, limit yourself to one argument that can be explained quickly.

Week 23

- Complete Steps Three, Four, and Five to finish your essay.
- Submit your essay for publication, following any guidelines,

Week 24

- Read “Common Fallacies of Argument, pages 118-120.
- Write one short paragraph for each logical fallacy, stating definitions in your own words and providing one original (or actual) example.

Spring Quarter: March - May

Week 25. We begin this year's big project: an argumentative research paper. This doesn't mean cranky and contentious; it means putting forth an opinion about given facts and defending that opinion with sound argument. The student may again need some help in coming up with an opinion that can be defended by facts and logic.

- Reread pages 85-86 and note carefully the difference between purely expository research papers and thesis papers. You will be writing a thesis, or argumentative, paper defending a position. The paper should be 7-10 double-spaced pages long.
- Choose a general subject that you already know enough about to have opinions. For example: Hang gliding, gymnastics, climate change. Form a thesis statement expressing an opinion, such as
Hang gliding is not nearly as dangerous as it used to be.
Parents, don't rush your young children into gymnastics!
Global warming is real, but not a threat.
This should be narrowed further: *Contrary to common knowledge, forests are not shrinking.*

Week 26

- Gather 3-5 reliable sources for your paper. One of these should be *against* your thesis. Depending on your subject, the most reliable information will be found in books and established journals (history and sociology), professional journals (medicine, science), or online (recent events, cutting-edge technology). An oral source, such as a professor or an expert in the subject, may also be appropriate.
- Write a bibliography, after the model found under "Sources," page 112.
- Begin your research, keeping notes on notecards.

Week 27

- Continue your research.

Week 28

- Finish your research.
- Adjust your thesis, if necessary—hopefully, you won't have to change your opinion!
- Organize your information and label your notecards.

Week 29

- On scratch paper, organize your paper following the steps on pages 98-101: determine common ground, list possible objections, decide on a general strategy.
- Write an outline.

Week 30

- Write a rough draft of your thesis paper, following your outline.

Week 31

- Finish your draft early in the week if it's not finished already.
- Write an engaging introduction.
- Revise your paper according to content questions on page 102 and style questions on page 67.
- Type or print a final copy.

Weeks 32 - 36. If this is the student's senior year, the last two months are generally very busy. If college is the next step, standardized testing, applications and visits, and possibly entrance essays will take up a lot of time. If not, you might consider a gap year to work, travel, apprentice, or pursue independent study. Use your judgment about the last five weeks, but also involve your student in making a scheduling. This might be a good time to write a "Business Plan" for immediate goals (see pages 29-31). Or write one essay per week on the same general subject, according to the suggestion on page 106. Or pursue research into possible career goals and the steps needed to reach them.

Also, evaluate: what's the measure of success for this course? If the student has learned to take notes, summarize information, organize information from different sources, express facts, ideas, and opinions effectively, and communicate well in both personal and professional circumstances—that's not just success. It's extraordinary!