

SCHOOL LAUNCH • COMPOSITION & CREATIVE WRITING

GRADE 6 COMPOSITION & CREATIVE WRITING: MAXIM, REFUTATION AND CONFIRMATION

The fourth year of classical writing: expand a maxim with the eight heads, test stories with refutation and confirmation, build a plot, write in images, argue with evidence, and tell one true moment well.

First edition

*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)*

COURSE GUIDE

Grade 6 continues the progymnasmata, the “first exercises” of the Greek and Roman schools, with three new ones. The maxim expands a general saying with the eight heads (Solomon’s Proverbs, Franklin’s Poor Richard). Refutation tests a story and shows why it should not be believed (Midas, Weems’s cherry tree, a fable’s moral, the flat-earth tale about Columbus). Confirmation turns the same heads around to show why a story is true, with witnesses and records: Paul’s witnesses, the Gettysburg Address, Luke and the Gallio inscription, and Edward Winslow’s letter about the 1621 harvest.

The creative track teaches conflict and plot (Jack London, Howard Pyle’s Robin Hood, Edmund in Narnia and the Prodigal Son), imagery (Tennyson’s “The Eagle,” the Psalms and Isaiah), and the memoir scene with Mark Twain as a cub pilot. A practical unit teaches claim, reason and evidence, fact and opinion, and two fallacies, and prepares a VFW Patriot’s Pen essay. Each lesson has a model passage, a picture study of fine art, a writing project, worked examples, practice, a game and a verse from the King James Bible.

WHO IT IS FOR

Written for students in grade 6 (about ages 11–12) who write a paragraph on their own. A parent reads along, listens and helps with revision. Pairs with Grammar Level 2, Units 13–16. Grade 5 Composition is helpful but not required; Lesson 1.2 reviews the eight heads.

HOW TO USE THIS COURSE

1. **The weekly rhythm.** One lesson a week in two sessions of 35–45 minutes. Session 1: warm-up, video, teaching, model passage and picture study. Session 2: worked examples, practice and the writing project.
2. **Copy, imitate, invent.** Each unit opens with a model to copy, then an imitation, then a piece of the student’s own.
3. **The quarter path.** Short on time? The ten ★ lessons make a one-quarter course.
4. **With Grammar.** Every lesson names the Grammar Level 2 lesson it uses (🔗). The revision checklist asks only for skills Grammar has taught.
5. **Speaking.** Each unit includes reading aloud, and Unit 8 holds a family debate.
6. **Contests.** Lesson 6.4 and the optional Contest Lab prepare an entry for the VFW Patriot’s Pen (grades 6–8; the 2026–27 deadline is October 31, 2026, so families starting in late summer may do 6.4 and 9.1 early) and the DAR American History Essay Contest (grades 6–8, 600–1,000 words).

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Unit 1: The Maxim (1–4)

The fourth classical exercise: the maxim, a short general saying about life. You will read Solomon’s Proverbs, use the eight heads on a maxim, study how Franklin sharpened old

sayings in Poor Richard, and write a full maxim on “Pride goeth before destruction.”

Unit 2: Refutation (5-8)

The fifth classical exercise: refutation, the argument that a story should not be believed. You will test a myth (Midas), a legend (Washington’s cherry tree), a fable’s moral (the Hare and the Tortoise), and then write a five-paragraph refutation of a historical legend.

Unit 3: Confirmation (9-12)

The sixth classical exercise: confirmation, the argument that a story is true. You will turn the heads of refutation around, learn the value of witnesses and records, confirm Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, study Luke as a historian with the Gallio inscription, and write a confirmation of the Pilgrims’ 1621 harvest from Edward Winslow’s letter.

Unit 4: 🦋 Story: Conflict and Plot (13-16)

The creative track: conflict and plot. You will study man against nature (Jack London), man against man (Robin Hood and the Sheriff), man against himself (Edmund and the Prodigal Son), and then write a complete short story on the five-part plot mountain.

Unit 5: 🦋 Poetry: Imagery (17-20)

The creative track: imagery. You will read Tennyson’s “The Eagle,” find similes and metaphors in the Psalms, see creation personified in Isaiah and the Psalms, and write an image poem from a great American landscape painting.

Unit 6: Argument Basics (21-24)

The practical unit: the parts of an argument (claim, reason, evidence), fact versus opinion, two common fallacies, and a workshop for the VFW Patriot’s Pen essay contest.

Unit 7: 🦋 Personal Narrative: The Memoir Scene (25-28)

The creative track: the memoir scene. With Mark Twain as a cub pilot on the Mississippi, you will slow down one true moment, fill it with sensory detail, add a short reflection, and write a finished scene of your own.

Unit 8: Review (29-32)

The review unit: revise the refutation and the confirmation, hold a family debate, and assemble the Grade 6 portfolio with a timed writing and a recitation.

Unit 9: Bonus: Contest Lab (Bonus)

An optional unit for students who want to enter a real contest: finish a VFW Patriot’s Pen essay (grades 6-8, 300-400 words, due October 31, 2026) and a DAR American History Essay (grades 6-8, 600-1,000 words), then polish and send an entry.

MATERIALS

- **A writing notebook (composition book)** One for the whole year.
- **A KJV Bible** For every lesson's verse and Units 1, 3 and 5.
- **A library copy of C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (optional)** For Lesson 4.3.
- **A timer** For the debate (8.2) and timed writing (8.4).
- **A folder for the portfolio** Unit 8.

GRADING

Grades come mostly from the writing projects, judged with each lesson's checklist (content, arrangement, style, mechanics). Praise first, then fix one thing at a time.

- Writing projects: 50%
- Writing notebook: 15%
- Unit reviews: 15%
- Unit portfolio pieces and oral work: 20%

A 90–100, B 80–89, C 70–79. Below 70: revise with help and resubmit.

- Mechanics are graded only on skills Grammar Level 2 has taught.
- A timed writing sample at mid-year and in 8.4 shows growth.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

You do not need to be a writer to teach this course. Read the model aloud, listen to your child, and use the checklist. Praise specific things before suggesting one change.

Each lesson has a *For families* note with background, sources and cautions. Public-domain model passages were cut by computer from downloaded Project Gutenberg texts (never typed from memory), and Scripture was checked against an offline King James text. Models written for this course are labeled. C. S. Lewis is summarized, not quoted, because his books are in copyright. Refutation is practiced on myths, legends and fable morals, never on Scripture or on current political quarrels.

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9.3 Final Polish and Entry 🏆

★ quarter path (10 lessons) · 📖 creative writing track · 🏆 ends with a piece for a contest in the School Launch directory · 🔗 Grammar Level 2 link in every lesson

THE MAXIM

The fourth classical exercise: the maxim, a short general saying about life. You will read Solomon's Proverbs, use the eight heads on a maxim, study how Franklin sharpened old sayings in Poor Richard, and write a full maxim on "Pride goeth before destruction."

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Knows the eight heads of the chreia (Grade 5) or will learn them in 1.2.
- Writes a clear paragraph.

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can define a maxim and tell it from a chreia.
- ☐ I can name the eight heads.
- ☐ I can sharpen a long saying into a maxim.
- ☐ I can write a full eight-head maxim.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Franklin's Way to Wealth (Project Gutenberg #43855)**
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/43855>): Free and short.

1.1 PROVERBS AS MAXIMS ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define a maxim and tell how it differs from a chreia.
- Read the opening of the book of Proverbs and name its purpose.
- Collect five maxims from Proverbs and say each in your own words.

Warm-up. Finish these sayings: “A stitch in time ...”, “Look before you ...”, “Haste makes ...”. Who said them? Does it matter?

Video slot. Video coming. The book of Proverbs for children (a Bible overview from a trusted ministry or church); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

maxim

A short, general statement that gives advice or tells a truth about life: “Pride goeth before destruction.”

proverb

A maxim that has been handed down and is widely known. The book of Proverbs is Solomon’s collection.

general statement

A statement about all people or most cases, not about one person on one day.

Solomon

The son of David and king of Israel, famous for the wisdom God gave him (1 Kings 3–4).

CORE IDEAS

The fourth exercise. In Grade 5 you learned the chreia: a saying or deed of a *famous person*. The maxim is the next exercise. A maxim is a short general statement about life, and it does not need a famous speaker. “Pride goeth before destruction” is true whoever says it.

Solomon’s book. First Kings tells us Solomon “spake three thousand proverbs.” The book of Proverbs opens by telling us why it was written: to give wisdom, instruction and “subtilty to the simple.” Maxims are short so they can be remembered and carried around in the mind.

Four marks of a maxim. A good maxim is (1) short, (2) general, (3) memorable, often with balance or contrast (“a wise son ... but a foolish son ...”), and (4) useful: it tells you what to do or avoid.

The model. *Proverbs 1:1–6 (KJV)*

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

PICTURE STUDY



Netherlandish Proverbs (detail), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1559 · Oil on oak panel · Gemäldegalerie, Berlin
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Bruegel painted a whole Flemish village in which the people act out more than a hundred old sayings, all at once. Here a woman hangs a blue cloak on her husband (she deceives him), and a man in red “casts roses before swine” (he wastes good things on those who cannot value them). Jesus used the same picture in Matthew 7:6.

Look closely

- Find the man scattering flowers. What are the animals doing with them?
- Find the woman in red. What is she doing?
- Pick one other person. What saying might he be acting out?

Talk about it

1. Choose one figure and write the maxim you think he shows.
2. Why would a painter want to paint sayings?

WRITING PROJECT: A MAXIM COLLECTION

Begin a maxim page in your writing notebook.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A KJV Bible

Steps

1. Read Proverbs 10 with a parent.
2. Copy five maxims you like, with their references.
3. Under each, write a paraphrase in one plain sentence.
4. Mark each one: is it advice (do this) or an observation (this is how life is)?
5. Read your favorite aloud and tell why you chose it.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I copied five maxims exactly, with references.
- Each paraphrase keeps the meaning.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Proverbs 1:5.
2. Write the four marks of a maxim.

History note. Bruegel's *Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559) is in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. The picture study shows only a central detail; elsewhere the full panel includes a few coarse jokes that are not shown here.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.1 "Coordinating and Correlative Conjunctions." Many proverbs balance two halves with *but*.

For families. The ancient teachers (Aphthonius, about A.D. 400) placed the maxim right after the chreia and expanded it with the same heads. This year's faith verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," which fits the year's work of testing stories and claims.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Is this a chreia or a maxim? “Asked what he wanted, Diogenes said, ‘Stand out of my sun.’”

1. It is about one famous man on one day.

Answer: A chreia.

Example 2. Paraphrase Proverbs 10:4: “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

1. Slack hand = lazy work; diligent = steady and careful.

Answer: Lazy work leads to want, but steady, careful work leads to plenty.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a maxim?
2. **EASY** How is a maxim different from a chreia?
3. **EASY** Who collected most of the book of Proverbs?
4. **EASY** Name the four marks of a maxim.
5. **MEDIUM** Find the contrast in Proverbs 10:1.
6. **MEDIUM** Write a maxim of your own about work.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Writing a story instead of a short general statement.
- Paraphrasing so loosely that the meaning changes.

Make it a game • Proverb Halves. The parent reads the first half of a proverb from Proverbs 10–15; the student guesses the second half, then checks.

Scripture. “And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.” (1 Kings 4:32, KJV)

Solomon’s maxims were many; the book of Proverbs keeps the best for us.

Practice: answers

1. A short general statement that gives advice or tells a truth about life.
2. A chreia is tied to a famous person and moment; a maxim is general.
3. Solomon.
4. Short, general, memorable, useful.

5. A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

6. Sample: The field you weed in June feeds you in October.

1.2 THE EIGHT HEADS FOR A MAXIM

OBJECTIVES

- Use the eight heads from Grade 5 on a maxim instead of a chreia.
- Expand Proverbs 6:6 (“Go to the ant”) head by head.
- Write the first four heads in short paragraphs.

Warm-up. Name the eight heads of the chreia from memory, with the hand motions you made last year.

Video slot. Video coming. How ants work together (a nature film for children); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

head

One step or topic in an expanded essay.

expand

To make a short saying into a longer piece by explaining, comparing and giving examples.

sluggard

An old word for a lazy person.

prudence

Wise planning ahead.

CORE IDEAS

Same heads, new start. Aphthonius expanded a maxim with the same eight heads as the chreia. The only change is the first head: instead of praising a famous speaker, you praise the author if he is known (Solomon), or say why the saying has lasted.

1. Praise the author (Solomon, Franklin, or “the old saying”)
2. Paraphrase the maxim
3. Give the cause (why it is true)
4. Contrast (what happens when it is ignored)
5. Comparison (it is like ...)
6. Example (a true story that shows it)
7. Testimony (what other wise men and Scripture say)
8. Epilogue (a short ending that urges the reader)

The ant. Solomon sends the lazy man to school with an ant. The ant has no boss standing over her, yet she gathers food in summer for the winter. That is the cause head: the ant

prepares because winter is sure to come.

Short paragraphs. At first each head is two to four sentences. Keep each paragraph to its own head.

The model. *Proverbs 6:6-11 (KJV)*

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

PICTURE STUDY



The Peasant Wedding, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, about 1567-1568 · Oil on oak panel · Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Bruegel painted a country wedding feast in a barn. Two men carry bowls of porridge on an old door; a man pours drink; the bride sits under a green cloth. Behind the walls of grain is the harvest that makes the feast possible.

Look closely

- Find the bride. How do you know it is she?
- What are the two men in front carrying, and on what?
- Look at the straw stacked on the back wall. What does it tell you about the season?

Talk about it

1. How does this feast show the ant's lesson: work in summer, eat later?
2. Write a maxim the bride's father might say.

WRITING PROJECT: THE ANT, FOUR HEADS

Expand Proverbs 6:6 with the first four heads.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A KJV Bible

Steps

1. Praise: who was Solomon, and why do we still read his proverbs?
2. Paraphrase "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."
3. Cause: why is the ant's way wise? (winter is coming; no one will feed her).
4. Contrast: what happens to the sluggard (Proverbs 6:10-11)?
5. Read your four paragraphs aloud.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I wrote four paragraphs, one for each head, in order.
- Each paragraph sticks to its head.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the eight heads for a maxim.
2. Write one sentence for each head on "Haste makes waste."

History note. Bruegel's *Peasant Wedding* is usually dated about 1567-1568 and hangs in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 13.4 "Predicate Adjectives." "The ant is wise." Find the predicate adjective in your cause head.

For families. The eight heads for the maxim follow Aphthonius. The model is printed from the offline King James text.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Write a cause head for Proverbs 6:6.

1. Why should we learn from the ant?
2. She prepares without being told.

Answer: The ant is wise because she looks ahead. No captain stands over her, yet she gathers grain while the sun is warm, knowing the cold will come.

Example 2. Write a contrast head.

1. What happens to the one who ignores the saying?

Answer: The sluggard folds his hands and says, “A little more sleep.” When winter comes, his barn is empty, and want comes on him like an armed man.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** How many heads are there for a maxim?
2. **EASY** Which head changes most from the chreia?
3. **EASY** What is a sluggard?
4. **EASY** Where does the ant gather her food?
5. **MEDIUM** Which head would Proverbs 30:25 fit?
6. **MEDIUM** Write a comparison head for Proverbs 6:6.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Repeating the paraphrase as the cause. The cause says *why*.
- Putting two heads in one paragraph.

Make it a game · Head Relay. Players stand in a line. The first gives the praise head for a proverb in one sentence; the next gives paraphrase, and so on through all eight.

Scripture. “The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;” (Proverbs 30:25, KJV)

Agur, another wise man in Proverbs, praises the same ant. That is testimony.

Practice: answers

1. Eight.
2. The first: praise of the author.
3. A lazy person.

4. In the summer and harvest.

5. Testimony: "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer."

6. Sample: The ant is like a farmer who fills his cellar in October.

1.3 FRANKLIN'S POOR RICHARD

OBJECTIVES

- Explain how Franklin gathered and sharpened old maxims.
- Find maxims inside Father Abraham's speech.
- Write three maxims of your own in Poor Richard's style.

Warm-up. Make up a short saying about getting up early. Make it rhyme or balance two halves.

Video slot. Video coming. Benjamin Franklin and Poor Richard's Almanack for children. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

almanac

A yearly book with calendars, weather guesses and short sayings.

Poor Richard

Richard Saunders, the made-up author of Franklin's almanac.

Father Abraham

The old man in Franklin's 1758 preface who strings Poor Richard's sayings into a speech.

vanity

Empty pride in looks or things.

CORE IDEAS

A maxim maker. Franklin printed *Poor Richard's Almanack* each year from 1733 to 1758. He did not invent most of its sayings. He took old ones and sharpened them, often by making them shorter or more balanced.

Maxims inside a speech. In the model, Father Abraham warns against pride of dress. Notice how many maxims he strings together: pride is a loud beggar; it is easier to suppress the first desire; little boats should keep near shore; pride breakfasted with Plenty and supped with Infamy.

How Franklin sharpened. Use balance ("Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty"), rhyme ("Vessels large may venture more, / But little boats should keep near shore"), and a picture (a beggar, a boat).

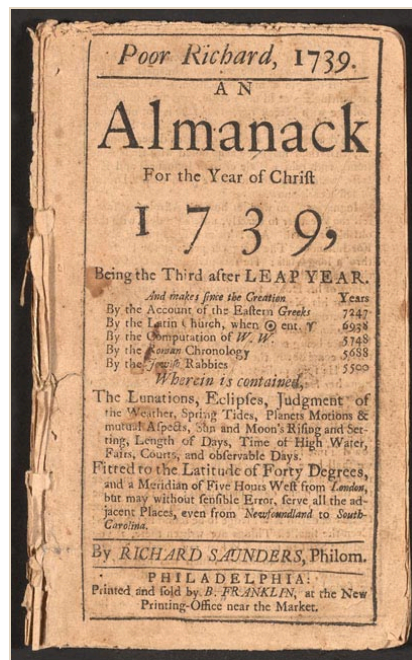
The model. *Benjamin Franklin, The Way to Wealth (Project Gutenberg #43855)*

"Pride is as loud a beggar as Want, and a great deal more saucy." When you have bought one fine thing, you must buy ten more, that your appearance may be all of a piece; but Poor Dick says, "It is easier to suppress the first desire, than to satisfy all that follow it." And it is as truly folly for the poor to ape the rich, as for the frog to swell, in order to equal the ox.

"Vessels large may venture more, But little boats should keep near shore."

It is, however, a folly soon punished: for, as Poor Richard says, "Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt;--Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty and supped with Infamy." And, after all, of what use is this pride of appearance, for which so much is risked, so much is suffered? It cannot promote health, nor ease pain; it makes no increase of merit in the person, it creates envy, it hastens misfortune.

PICTURE STUDY



Poor Richard, 1739: An Almanack, Benjamin Franklin, printer, 1738 (for the year 1739) · Printed title page ·
Library of Congress (scan via Wikimedia Commons)
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

This is the real title page of Franklin's almanac for the year 1739, printed in Philadelphia. Readers bought it for the calendar and weather, and remembered it for the sayings tucked into the margins.

Look closely

- What words are largest on the page?
- Find the name of the city where it was printed.
- What else did people want in an almanac?

Talk about it

1. Why would short sayings sell an almanac?
2. Write a saying that could go on this page.

WRITING PROJECT: THREE POOR RICHARD MAXIMS

Write three maxims of your own in Franklin's style, then expand one with the first two heads.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Write one maxim with balance (two halves).
2. Write one with rhyme.
3. Write one with a picture (an animal, a tool, a boat).
4. Choose the best and write a praise head (for Poor Richard) and a paraphrase head.
5. Read them aloud to the family.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- Each maxim is short and general.
- I used balance, rhyme and a picture once each.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy two maxims from the model.
2. List three old sayings you hear at home.

History note. Franklin published the almanac under the name Richard Saunders. The title page shown is for 1739.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 "Quotation Marks and Dialogue." Father Abraham quotes Poor Richard inside his own speech. Notice the single and double quotation marks.

For families. The model is cut from an 1810 London edition of *The Way to Wealth* (Project Gutenberg #43855), which keeps the old punctuation. Franklin dated the speech July 7, 1757; it appeared as the preface to *Poor Richard Improved* for 1758 (Founders Online).

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Sharpen: “If you are always buying things to look fancy, you will end up having to buy more and more.”

1. Make it short.
2. Use a picture or balance.

Answer: “One fine coat calls for ten.”

Example 2. Paraphrase: “Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt.”

1. Dines = eats the noon meal; sups = eats the evening meal.

Answer: Pride that feeds on showing off will end the day being scorned.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Who was Poor Richard?
2. **EASY** What years did Franklin print the almanac?
3. **EASY** Did Franklin invent all his sayings?
4. **EASY** Finish: “Vessels large may venture more, ...”
5. **MEDIUM** Name three ways Franklin sharpened sayings.
6. **MEDIUM** Explain “Pride is as loud a beggar as Want.”

COMMON MISTAKES

- Making a “maxim” that is really a long sentence.
- Copying a famous saying and calling it your own.

Make it a game • Sharpen It. One player says a long, wordy piece of advice. The others race to say it as a short maxim.

Scripture. “Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” (Proverbs 16:19, KJV)

Solomon said it before Poor Richard: humility is better than proud riches.

Practice: answers

1. The made-up author of Franklin’s almanac.
2. 1733 to 1758.
3. No; he gathered and sharpened many old ones.
4. “But little boats should keep near shore.”

5. Balance, rhyme, a picture.

6. Pride keeps demanding things just as poverty does, and it is even bolder.

1.4 WRITING THE FULL MAXIM ★

OBJECTIVES

- Write a full eight-head maxim on “Pride goeth before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18).
- Use a true historical or Bible example.
- Revise with predicate nominatives and adjectives used correctly.

Warm-up. Tell a time when someone bragged and then fell, in a game or a race. What happened?

Video slot. Video coming. The Tower of Babel (a Bible story video from a trusted ministry); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

haughty

Proud and looking down on others.

destruction

Ruin; being destroyed.

epilogue

A short ending that sums up and urges.

example head

A true story that shows the maxim at work.

CORE IDEAS

The whole maxim. Today you write all eight heads on Proverbs 16:18. Aim for eight short paragraphs, 300 to 400 words.

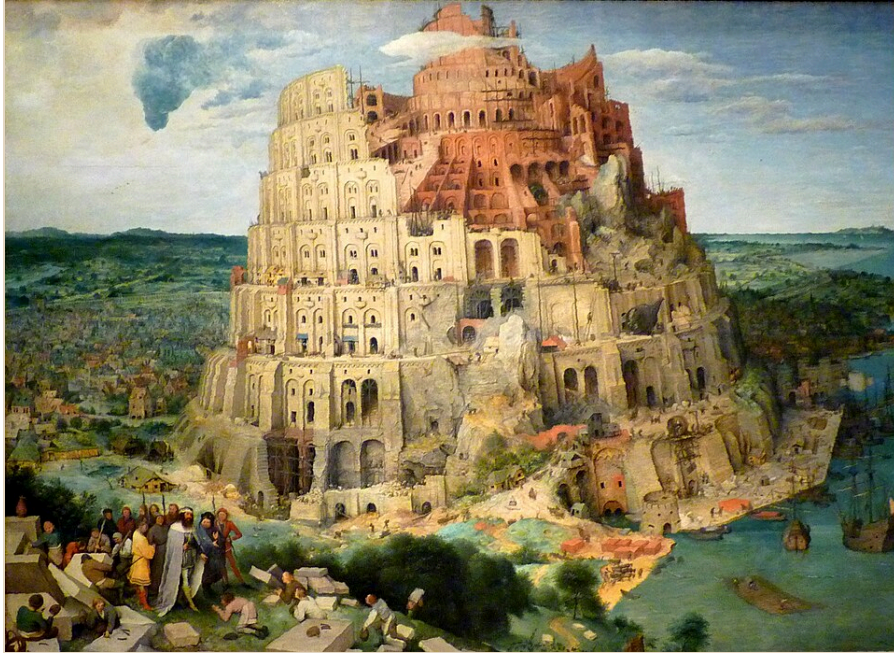
Examples. Scripture is full of pride before a fall: Babel (Genesis 11), Pharaoh, Haman (Esther 7), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) and Herod (Acts 12:21–23). Choose one and tell it briefly, as you learned in Grade 5.

Testimony. Quote Proverbs 16:19, James 4:6 or Poor Richard: “Pride breakfasted with Plenty, dined with Poverty and supped with Infamy.” Quote exactly and name the source.

The model. *Proverbs 16:18–19 (KJV)*

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

PICTURE STUDY



The Tower of Babel, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1563 · Oil on oak panel · Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Bruegel imagined the Tower of Babel as a huge building rising beside a busy harbor. In the corner a king visits with his men, and the stonecutters kneel. The tower is already cracking and leaning: it will never be finished.

Look closely

- Find the king. How do the workers greet him?
- Look for places where the tower is unfinished or crooked.
- How small are the people beside the tower?

Talk about it

1. How does Bruegel show pride before a fall?
2. Write a one-sentence epilogue the painting could teach.

WRITING PROJECT: THE FULL MAXIM

Write all eight heads on “Pride goeth before destruction.”

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A KJV Bible
- Notes from 1.2 and 1.3

Steps

1. Praise Solomon as author.
2. Paraphrase the maxim.
3. Cause: why does pride lead to a fall?
4. Contrast: the humble man.
5. Comparison: pride is like ... (a tower with no foundation, a balloon).
6. Example: one Bible or history story, told briefly.
7. Testimony: Scripture or Poor Richard, quoted exactly.
8. Epilogue: urge the reader to humility.
9. Read it aloud and revise.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I wrote all eight heads in order.
- My example is true and told briefly.
- Quotations are exact, with sources.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Proverbs 16:18 from memory.
2. List three Bible people whose pride came before a fall.

History note. Bruegel painted the Tower of Babel more than once. This large version (1563) is in Vienna; a smaller one is in Rotterdam.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 13.3 “Predicate Nominatives.” Use the subject form after a linking verb: “It was he.”

For families. The Genesis 11 example is quoted from the King James Version (Genesis 11:4). Keep examples from Scripture and history, not from people the child knows.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Write an example head using Babel.

1. Who, what, why, result.

Answer: The men of Babel said, “Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.” But the Lord confounded their language, and they left off building. The tower of their pride became a heap.

Example 2. Find and fix: “The proudest man in the story was him.”

1. After a linking verb, use the subject form (predicate nominative).

Answer: The proudest man in the story was he.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is the maxim in Proverbs 16:18?
2. **EASY** What does “haughty” mean?
3. **EASY** Name one Bible example of pride before a fall.
4. **EASY** Which head tells a true story?
5. **MEDIUM** Write a comparison for pride.
6. **MEDIUM** Write an epilogue in two sentences.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Choosing an example that is not really about pride.
- Ending with a new idea instead of an epilogue that sums up.

Make it a game · Proud Tower. Stack blocks. Each block needs a true example of pride or humility. Name a proud example and the tower gets a block taken out!

Scripture. “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (James 4:6, KJV)

The testimony head of Scripture: God resists the proud.

Practice: answers

1. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”
2. Proud, looking down on others.
3. Babel, Pharaoh, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar or Herod.
4. Example.
5. Sample: Pride is like a tall tower built on sand: the higher it goes, the harder it falls.
6. Sample: Let us not build towers to our own names. God gives grace to the humble.

UNIT 1 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) Define a maxim.
2. (2 pts) How is a maxim different from a chreia?
3. (8 pts) Name the eight heads.
4. (2 pts) Name two ways Franklin sharpened sayings.
5. (3 pts) Write a cause head for “Look before you leap.”
6. (2 pts) Fix: “The winner was him.”

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: A MAXIM FOR THE YEAR

Copy your best full maxim (from 1.4) on clean paper with a title. It begins your Grade 6 portfolio.

- **Eight heads:** All eight present, in order, each in its own paragraph.
- **Example:** A true example, told briefly.
- **Accuracy:** Scripture and Franklin quoted exactly.
- **Mechanics:** Predicate nominatives and adjectives used correctly.

Answer key

1. A short general statement that gives advice or tells a truth about life.
2. A chreia is tied to a famous person and moment; a maxim is general.
3. Praise, paraphrase, cause, contrast, comparison, example, testimony, epilogue.
4. Two of: balance, rhyme, a picture, fewer words.
5. Sample: We must look first, because once we jump we cannot change where we land.
6. The winner was he.

REFUTATION

The fifth classical exercise: refutation, the argument that a story should not be believed. You will test a myth (Midas), a legend (Washington's cherry tree), a fable's moral (the Hare and the Tortoise), and then write a five-paragraph refutation of a historical legend.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Can retell a story briefly (narrative, Grade 5).
- Knows commas after introductory words.

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can tell a story fairly before refuting it.
- ☐ I can use the four heads: unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.
- ☐ I can trace a story to its first source.
- ☐ I can write a five-paragraph refutation.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Hawthorne, A Wonder-Book (Project Gutenberg #32242)**
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/32242>): Free; with Crane's pictures.
- **Mount Vernon: "Cherry Tree Myth"**
(<https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/cherry-tree-myth>): For parents.

2.1 IS THAT STORY BELIEVABLE? ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define refutation: an argument that a story is not believable.
- Name four heads of refutation: unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.
- Refute the myth of King Midas in four short paragraphs.

Warm-up. Your little brother says a dog ate his math book, then spat it out finished. How do you know he is not telling the truth? Name two reasons.

Video slot. Video coming. King Midas and the golden touch, a read-aloud of Hawthorne or a classic retelling; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

refutation

An argument that a story or claim is not believable. Say it ref-yoo-TAY-shun.

myth

An old made-up story about gods or heroes.

exposition

A short, fair retelling of the story you are about to refute.

heads of refutation

The checks for a doubtful story: unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.

CORE IDEAS

The fifth exercise. Refutation tests a story to show that it should not be believed. Theon and Aphthonius had students refute the old Greek myths. The student first tells the story fairly (exposition), then examines it head by head.

Four heads.

- **Unclear:** the story leaves out who, when, where or how, so no one can check it.
- **Impossible:** it could not happen, by the nature of things.
- **Unfitting:** it does not fit the character of the person or of God (a wise man acting like a fool).
- **Illogical:** its parts contradict each other, or the end does not follow from the beginning.

Aphthonius lists a few more (unpersuasive, inexpedient), but these four are enough to begin.

Be fair. We refute the story, not the people who love it. Hawthorne told the Midas tale to teach that gold is worth less than love. The *lesson* can be good even when the *story* is impossible.

The model. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *"The Golden Touch," in A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys (1851; Project Gutenberg #32242)*

"It is only this," replied Midas. "I am weary of collecting my treasures with so much trouble, and beholding the heap so diminutive, after I have done my best. I wish everything that I touch to be changed to gold!"

The stranger's smile grew so very broad, that it seemed to fill the room like an outburst of the sun, gleaming into a shadowy dell, where the yellow autumnal leaves--for so looked the lumps and particles of gold--lie strewn in the glow of light.

"The Golden Touch!" exclaimed he. "You certainly deserve credit, friend Midas, for striking out so brilliant a conception. But are you quite sure that this will satisfy you?"

"How could it fail?" said Midas.

"And will you never regret the possession of it?"

"What could induce me?" asked Midas. "I ask nothing else, to render me perfectly happy."

"Be it as you wish, then," replied the stranger, waving his hand in token of farewell. "To-morrow, at sunrise, you will find yourself gifted with the Golden Touch."

The figure of the stranger then became exceedingly bright, and Midas involuntarily closed his eyes. On opening them again, he beheld only one yellow sunbeam in the room, and, all around him, the glistening of the precious metal which he had spent his life in hoarding up.

PICTURE STUDY



King Midas with His Daughter, Walter Crane, 1893 · Color illustration · From Hawthorne's *A Wonder Book*, Houghton Mifflin edition
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Walter Crane drew this picture for an 1893 edition of Hawthorne's book. King Midas sits in his rich hall. Beside him stands his daughter Marygold, turned into a golden statue by her father's touch.

Look closely

- What shows that Midas is a king?
- What has happened to the girl?
- How does Crane use gold color in the whole picture?

Talk about it

1. Midas got exactly what he wished for. Why is he sad?
2. Write one sentence of refutation: could this really happen?

WRITING PROJECT: REFUTING MIDAS

Write a short refutation of the Midas story.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Exposition: tell the Midas story fairly in three sentences.

2. Unclear: when and where did Midas live? Who saw it?
3. Impossible: can a touch change food or a child to gold?
4. Unfitting: would a stranger who was truly good grant such a harmful wish?
5. Illogical: if all he touched turned to gold, what about his clothes and his chair?
6. End with one sentence: the story is not history, but its lesson about greed is true.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I told the story fairly before refuting it.
- I used all four heads.
- I said what is good in the story.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the four heads with a short definition of each.
2. Choose a tall tale (Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill) and list one impossible thing.

History note. Hawthorne published *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* in 1851, retelling Greek myths for American children. Walter Crane's illustrated edition appeared in 1893.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.1 "Commas with Introductory Words, Direct Address and Appositives." Use commas after *First*, *Second*, and *Finally*.

For families. Refutation teaches children to test claims with reason, never to doubt Scripture. The game deliberately includes Methuselah (Genesis 5:27): talk about the difference between a story with no witness and a record God has given. Hawthorne's text is from Project Gutenberg #32242 (1893 Crane edition).

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Which head? "The story never says what year this happened or who saw it."

1. It leaves out time and witnesses.

Answer: Unclear.

Example 2. Which head? “Midas touched his chair and it turned to gold, but his clothes did not.”

1. The story does not follow its own rule.

Answer: Illogical (inconsistent).

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a refutation?
2. **EASY** What is the exposition?
3. **EASY** Name the four heads.
4. **EASY** Who wrote “The Golden Touch”?
5. **MEDIUM** Can a story be impossible and still teach a true lesson?
6. **MEDIUM** Write an “impossible” sentence about a dragon story.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Mocking the story or the people who tell it.
- Skipping the exposition, so the reader does not know what is being refuted.

Make it a game · Could It Happen?. The parent reads short claims (“a man lived 969 years,” “a hare raced a tortoise,” “a boy chopped a cherry tree”). Players say: impossible, possible, or needs evidence. Talk about Genesis 5:27: some things are true because God says so.

Scripture. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV)

This year’s verse: test every claim and keep what is good.

Practice: answers

1. An argument that a story is not believable.
2. A fair retelling of the story before you refute it.
3. Unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne.
5. Yes: Midas is a myth, but greed truly brings sorrow.
6. Sample: No animal can breathe fire, because no creature carries a flame inside its body.

2.2 REFUTING A LEGEND

OBJECTIVES

- Tell what is and is not known about Washington and the cherry tree.
- Trace a story to its first source.
- Write a fair refutation that honors Washington's real honesty.

Warm-up. Where did you first hear about George Washington and the cherry tree? Who told it? Do you know where they heard it?

Video slot. Video coming. The cherry tree story and Parson Weems, from Mount Vernon or another museum channel; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

legend

A story about a real person that may not be true.

first source

The earliest place a story appears in writing.

anecdote

A short story about a person, often told to show character.

Parson Weems

Mason Locke Weems, a minister and bookseller who wrote a popular life of Washington.

CORE IDEAS

Where the story comes from. Washington died in 1799. Mason Locke Weems wrote a short life of him soon after. The cherry tree story first appears in the fifth edition of that book, in 1806. Weems says he heard it from an aged lady who was a distant relative and had known the family. No letter, diary or other witness from Washington's boyhood tells it.

What is and is not known. Known: Washington was famous for honesty and self-control; his family farm was Ferry Farm, in Virginia. Not known: that the hatchet or the tree ever existed. Historians at Mount Vernon call the story a legend, because its only source is Weems, writing about seventy years after the event.

A fair refutation. Use the heads. *Unclear*: no date, no named witness. *Unfitting*? No; the story fits Washington's character, which is why people believed it. *Illogical*? No. So the strongest head is *unclear*: one late, unnamed witness. We should say "a legend" and still admire the real Washington.

The model. *M. L. Weems, the cherry tree story, as reprinted in Children's Book of Patriotic Stories: The Spirit of '76 (1917; Project Gutenberg #69235)*

When George was about six years old he was made the wealthy master of a *hatchet*, of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond; and was constantly going about chopping everything that came in his way. One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry tree, which he barked so terribly that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning, the old gentleman, finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favorite, came into the house; and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. "George," said his father, "do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?" This was a tough question, and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself, and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out, "I can't tell a lie, Pa, you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet."

"Run to my arms, you dearest boy," cried his father; "such an act in my son is worth more than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold."

PICTURE STUDY



*"Father, I Can Not Tell a Lie: I Cut the Tree", John C. McRae (engraver), after a painting by G. G. White, 1867 · Engraving · Library of Congress
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain*

This engraving, made in 1867 from a painting by G. G. White, shows the most famous moment of Weems's story. It hung in many American homes and schools. Pictures like this helped a legend look like history.

Look closely

- Find young George, his father and the tree.
- Where is the hatchet?
- What do the faces tell you about each person?

Talk about it

1. Why would a family want this picture on the wall?
2. Does a picture make a story more believable? Should it?

WRITING PROJECT: THE CHERRY TREE ON TRIAL

Write a fair refutation of the cherry tree story in four paragraphs.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Exposition: tell the story fairly in three sentences.

2. Source: when and where did it first appear? Who told Weems?
3. Use the heads: which apply and which do not? Be honest.
4. Conclusion: call it a legend, and name one true fact about Washington's honesty or self-control.
5. Read it to a parent and ask: was I fair?

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I named the first source and its date.
- I said which heads do not apply.
- I ended with something true and good.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Washington's words from the model.
2. Write "What is known" and "What is not known" as two lists.

History note. The engraving by John C. McRae (1867), after a painting by George Gorgas White, is in the Library of Congress.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 "Quotation Marks and Dialogue." Weems puts George's and his father's words in quotation marks. Check every opening and closing mark in your exposition.

For families. Weems's 1806 telling is framed as a tale from "an aged lady"; the reprint used here (Project Gutenberg #69235, 1917, marked "adapted from M. L. Weems") drops that frame but keeps Weems's story and words. See Mount Vernon's "Cherry Tree Myth" article for parents. The lesson is careful to separate the legend from Washington's real character.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Is the story impossible?

1. Boys do cut trees, and fathers do forgive.

Answer: No. It is possible; the problem is that it is unclear and late.

Example 2. Write the source sentence.

1. Name the author, the edition and the year.

Answer: The story first appears in the fifth edition of Mason Locke Weems's life of Washington, published in 1806, seven years after Washington died.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Who first told the cherry tree story in print?
2. **EASY** In what year and edition?
3. **EASY** Who did Weems say told him the story?
4. **EASY** What is a legend?
5. **MEDIUM** Which head of refutation is strongest here, and why?
6. **MEDIUM** Name one head that does not apply.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Saying "Washington was a liar" or "Washington was not honest." The legend is doubtful; his honesty is not.
- Calling a story false just because it is old. Ask for the source.

Make it a game · Trace It Back. The parent names a famous saying or story. Players guess where it first appeared, then look it up together.

Scripture. "Lying lips are abomination to the LORD : but they that deal truly are his delight." (Proverbs 12:22, KJV)

Weems wanted children to love truth. We honor that by telling the truth about his story.

Practice: answers

1. Mason Locke Weems.
2. 1806, the fifth edition.
3. An aged lady, a distant relative of the family.
4. A story about a real person that may not be true.
5. Unclear: one late, unnamed witness and no record from the time.
6. Unfitting or impossible: it fits Washington's character and could have happened.

2.3 REFUTING A FABLE'S MORAL

OBJECTIVES

- Tell the difference between refuting a story and refuting its moral.
- Test the moral “Slow but steady wins the race.”
- Rewrite a moral so that it is true.

Warm-up. Is it always true that “slow and steady wins the race”? Would a slow runner who never stops beat a fast runner who never stops?

Video slot. Video coming. The Tortoise and the Hare, a classic animated or read-aloud version; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

moral

The lesson stated at the end of a fable.

overstatement

Saying something is always true when it is only sometimes true.

qualify

To add words like *often* or *usually* to make a claim exact.

steady

Not stopping; keeping on.

CORE IDEAS

Two kinds of refutation. Everyone knows a fable is made up; we do not refute that animals can talk. But a *moral* is a claim about real life, and claims can be tested.

Testing the moral. “Slow but steady wins the race.” Read the fable again. Did the Tortoise win because she was slow? No. She won because she kept going, and the Hare stopped to sleep. The moral praises two things, but only one of them won the race.

A better moral. Refute the part that is false, keep the part that is true, and rewrite: “Steady beats swift when swift stops.” Or use Scripture: “The race is not to the swift” (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

The model. Aesop, “*The Hare and the Tortoise*,” translated by George Fyler Townsend (Project Gutenberg #21)

A Hare one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise, who replied, laughing: “Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race.”

The Hare, believing her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course and fix the goal. On the day appointed for the race the two started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue.

Slow but steady wins the race.

PICTURE STUDY



The Tortoise and the Hare, Arthur Rackham, 1912 · Watercolor illustration · From *Aesop's Fables* (London, 1912)

Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Arthur Rackham painted this for a 1912 edition of Aesop. The tortoise trudges toward the goal while the hare naps. Rackham loved twisted trees and small watching animals.

Look closely

- Where is the hare? Where is the tortoise?
- Who is watching the race?
- What does Rackham do with the trees?

Talk about it

1. Did the tortoise win because she was slow? Use the picture to answer.
2. Write a new caption that states a truer moral.

WRITING PROJECT: A MORAL ON TRIAL

Refute and rewrite one fable moral.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Aesop's fables (Townsend)

Steps

1. Choose "Slow but steady wins the race" or another moral.
2. Exposition: tell the fable in three sentences.
3. Show which part of the moral is true and which is overstated.
4. Give a real-life case where the moral fails.
5. Write a better moral and a Bible verse that agrees.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I refuted the moral, not the talking animals.
- I kept what is true.
- My new moral is short and exact.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the moral and your rewritten moral.
2. List three words that qualify a claim (often, usually, sometimes).

History note. Arthur Rackham (1867–1939) illustrated *Aesop's Fables* in 1912, with an introduction by G. K. Chesterton.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 14.4 "Using Modifiers Correctly." Qualifying words like *usually* and *often* are adverbs; put them next to the word they change.

For families. Townsend's Aesop is Project Gutenberg #21. Rackham's 1912 illustrations are in the public domain; the Commons file was checked for license.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Qualify: “People who work hard always get rich.”

1. Is it always true? No.

Answer: “People who work hard usually have enough” (compare Proverbs 10:4).

Example 2. What is true in “Slow but steady wins the race”?

1. Separate the two parts.

Answer: Steadiness wins; slowness does not. The Hare lost by stopping.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a moral?
2. **EASY** Why don't we refute the talking animals?
3. **EASY** Why did the Tortoise win?
4. **EASY** What does “qualify” a claim mean?
5. **MEDIUM** Rewrite the moral of the Hare and the Tortoise.
6. **MEDIUM** Find the verse in Ecclesiastes 9:11 that fits.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Refuting the whole fable instead of the moral.
- Throwing out a moral that is partly true.

Make it a game · Always or Often?. The parent says a saying (“Cheaters never win”). Players vote: always true, often true, or false. Then rewrite it.

Scripture. “I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:11, KJV)

Solomon observes that the swift do not always win; God's providence rules over time and chance.

Practice: answers

1. The lesson stated at the end of a fable.
2. Everyone knows a fable is made up; the moral is the claim.
3. She never stopped, and the Hare slept.

4. Add words that make it exact, like “often.”
5. Sample: Steady beats swift when swift stops.
6. “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

2.4 WRITING A REFUTATION

OBJECTIVES

- Write a five-paragraph refutation of a historical legend.
- Use exposition, at least two heads, and a fair conclusion.
- Use semicolons and colons correctly.

Warm-up. Have you heard that people in the time of Columbus thought the world was flat? Where did you hear it?

Video slot. Video coming. Columbus and the flat-earth myth (a history channel for older students; preview first). Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

historical legend

A false or unproved story about a real event.

trace

To follow a story back to where it began.

conclusion

The last paragraph, which states what the reader should now believe.

fair-minded

Giving the other side its due.

CORE IDEAS

The shape of a refutation. (1) Introduction and exposition: tell the story fairly. (2–4) One paragraph for each head you use, strongest last. (5) Conclusion: what should we believe instead?

The model. The sample refutes the old schoolbook story that learned men in 1492 believed the earth was flat. Notice how it uses the heads, adds a paragraph that traces the story back to Washington Irving, and ends by saying what is true.

Choose your legend. Columbus and the flat earth; Newton’s apple hitting him on the head; Betsy Ross designing the first flag; or the cherry tree. Research it with a parent in an encyclopedia or a museum site.

The model. *Sample refutation, written for this course*

A sample refutation, written for this course.

Many schoolbooks once said that in 1492 the learned men of Spain believed the earth was flat, and that Columbus sailed to prove it round. The story is a good one, but it is not true.

First, the story is **unclear**: it never names one scholar who taught a flat earth. Second, it is **illogical**: Spain's learned men had studied for centuries from books such as Sacrobosco's *On the Sphere*, a standard school text since the 1200s, which taught that the earth is a globe. The real quarrel was about size. The experts said Asia was too far west to reach, and they were right; Columbus guessed the earth was much smaller than it is. Third, the story can be **traced**: it spread after Washington Irving's life of Columbus (1828), which turned a dispute about distance into a quarrel about shape.

So the story should be set aside. Columbus was bold and he was a great sailor, but he did not prove the earth round. Men who loved learning knew it already.

PICTURE STUDY



Columbus before the Queen, Emanuel Leutze, 1843 · Oil on canvas · Brooklyn Museum, New York
Wikimedia Commons · No restrictions

Emanuel Leutze, who later painted *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, painted Columbus before Queen Isabella of Spain. It shows the sad end of the story: Columbus was sent home in chains in 1500 and came to beg the queen for justice.

Look closely

- What is on Columbus's wrists?
- How does the queen look at him?
- Where does the light fall?

Talk about it

1. Painters, like writers, can make a scene more dramatic than it was. How would you check whether this moment really happened this way?
2. Write one fair sentence about Columbus.

WRITING PROJECT: FIVE-PARAGRAPH REFUTATION

Refute one historical legend in five paragraphs.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- An encyclopedia or museum website (with a parent)

Steps

1. Choose a legend and find its first source.
2. Paragraph 1: exposition.
3. Paragraphs 2-4: three heads (or two heads and a “trace” paragraph).
4. Paragraph 5: what is true instead.
5. Check every semicolon and colon.
6. Read it aloud.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I named my sources.
- Each middle paragraph uses one head.
- I was fair to the people in the story.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Outline the model in five lines.
2. List three legends you would like to test.

History note. Leutze painted *Columbus before the Queen* in 1843; it is in the Brooklyn Museum. Columbus was returned to Spain in chains in 1500 and later received by the king and queen.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.4 “Semicolons and Colons.”

For families. The model was written for this course. Its facts: Sacrobosco’s *De sphaera* (13th century) taught a round earth; the dispute with Columbus was about distance;

Irving's 1828 *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* popularized the flat-earth version (see historian Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Inventing the Flat Earth*, 1991).

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Join with a semicolon: "The experts were right about the distance. Columbus was wrong."

1. Two closely related sentences.

Answer: The experts were right about the distance; Columbus was wrong.

Example 2. Write a fair conclusion for Newton's apple.

1. Say what is true.

Answer: Newton may well have seen an apple fall and wondered why; but no witness says it struck his head. The true story is better: he thought hard about what he saw.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What goes in the first paragraph?
2. **EASY** What goes in the last paragraph?
3. **EASY** Who spread the flat-earth story about Columbus?
4. **EASY** What did the experts really argue with Columbus about?
5. **MEDIUM** Which head fits "no scholar is named"?
6. **MEDIUM** Punctuate: "He knew three things the sea, the stars and the wind."

COMMON MISTAKES

- Calling someone a liar instead of testing the story.
- Leaving the reader with nothing true at the end.

Make it a game • Legend or Fact?. Each player brings one famous story. The family votes legend or fact, then checks together.

Scripture. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16, KJV)

Peter separates "cunningly devised fables" from what eyewitnesses saw. Refutation helps us tell them apart.

1. The introduction and a fair exposition of the story.
2. What we should believe instead.
3. Washington Irving's life of Columbus (1828) helped spread it.
4. The size of the earth and the distance to Asia.
5. Unclear.
6. He knew three things: the sea, the stars and the wind.

UNIT 2 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) Define refutation.
2. (4 pts) Name the four heads.
3. (2 pts) Where and when does the cherry tree story first appear?
4. (3 pts) What is wrong with the moral “Slow but steady wins the race”?
5. (2 pts) What goes in the first paragraph of a refutation?
6. (2 pts) Punctuate: “Bring three things a pen, a ruler and paper.”

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: A REFUTATION

Copy your five-paragraph refutation (2.4) with a title and a list of sources.

- **Fairness:** The story is told fairly before it is tested.
- **Heads:** At least two heads, each in its own paragraph.
- **Sources:** The first source of the story is named.
- **Mechanics:** Semicolons, colons and introductory commas correct.

Answer key

1. An argument that a story or claim is not believable.
2. Unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.
3. In the fifth edition of Weems’s life of Washington, 1806.
4. Slowness did not win; steadiness did. It overstates.
5. A fair exposition of the story.
6. Bring three things: a pen, a ruler and paper.

CONFIRMATION

The sixth classical exercise: confirmation, the argument that a story is true. You will turn the heads of refutation around, learn the value of witnesses and records, confirm Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, study Luke as a historian with the Gallio inscription, and write a confirmation of the Pilgrims' 1621 harvest from Edward Winslow's letter.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Knows the heads of refutation (Unit 2).

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can name the five heads of confirmation.
- ☐ I can tell primary from secondary sources.
- ☐ I can explain how the Gallio inscription confirms Acts 18.
- ☐ I can write a five-paragraph confirmation from a primary source.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Library of Congress: Gettysburg Address exhibit**
(<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gettysburg-address/>): The five copies.
- **Pilgrim Hall Museum: primary sources for 1621**
(<https://www.pilgrimhall.org/primary-sources-for-the-first-thanksgiving-at-plymouth/>): Winslow and Bradford.

3.1 ARGUING THAT A STORY IS TRUE ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define confirmation: an argument that a story is believable.
- Turn the heads of refutation around: clear, possible, fitting, logical, witnessed.
- Find each head in Paul's list of witnesses (1 Corinthians 15).

Warm-up. How do you know your grandparents' wedding really happened? Name three kinds of proof.

Video slot. Video coming. What makes a good witness? (a children's civics or courtroom explainer); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

confirmation

An argument that a story or claim is believable and true.

witness

A person who saw or heard what happened and tells it.

eyewitness

A witness who saw it with his own eyes.

corroborate

To back up: a second witness corroborates the first.

CORE IDEAS

The sixth exercise. Confirmation is refutation turned around. Instead of showing a story is unclear or impossible, you show that it is clear, possible, fitting and logical, and that good witnesses tell it.

- **Clear:** it names persons, time and place, so it can be checked.
- **Possible:** nothing in it is against the nature of things (or, for Scripture, against the power of God).
- **Fitting:** it fits the character of the people in it.
- **Logical:** its parts agree with each other.
- **Witnessed:** people who were there told it, early, and others did not deny it.

Paul's confirmation. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul confirms the resurrection of Christ. He names witnesses: Cephas (Peter), the twelve, more than five hundred at once, James, all the apostles, and himself. He adds that most of the five hundred were still alive: anyone could go and ask them.

Witnesses matter most. Scripture's own rule is that a matter is settled "at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three" (Deuteronomy 19:15). The more early, named and independent the witnesses, the stronger the confirmation.

The model. *1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (KJV)*

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

PICTURE STUDY



The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1568 · Tempera on canvas · Museo di Capodimonte, Naples
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Bruegel painted Jesus' parable: "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14). The first man has already fallen; the second is tumbling; the others still trust the man in front. Behind them stands a church, steady and upright.

Look closely

- Count the men. Which ones are falling?
- How does each man hold on to the next?
- Look at their faces. What do the ones at the back not know?

Talk about it

1. The men at the back believe the man in front without checking. How is that like believing a story without witnesses?
2. Write a maxim the painting teaches.

WRITING PROJECT: FINDING THE HEADS IN PAUL

Mark each head of confirmation in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A KJV Bible

Steps

1. Copy 1 Corinthians 15:3–8.
2. Underline every named witness.
3. Beside the passage, write which heads Paul uses: clear, witnessed, and so on.
4. Write one paragraph: why does Paul say most of the five hundred were still alive?
5. Read your paragraph to a parent.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I found at least five witnesses.
- I explained why living witnesses matter.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the five heads of confirmation.
2. Copy Deuteronomy 19:15b.

History note. Bruegel painted *The Blind Leading the Blind* in 1568, a year before he died; it is in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.1 “Commas with Introductory Words, Direct Address and Appositives.” “Cephas, that is Peter, ...” uses an appositive.

For families. This unit replaces the outline’s Caravaggio *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* (which shows Christ’s bare side) with Bruegel’s *Blind Leading the Blind*, fully clothed. Matthew 15:14 is the parable it illustrates.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Turn a head around: refutation says “unclear.” What does confirmation say?

1. Opposite of unclear.

Answer: Clear: it names who, when and where.

Example 2. Why is “of whom the greater part remain unto this present” strong evidence?

1. Readers could check.

Answer: The witnesses were alive when Paul wrote, so anyone who doubted could ask them.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a confirmation?
2. **EASY** Name the five heads of confirmation.
3. **EASY** How many people saw Christ at once, says Paul?
4. **EASY** What does “corroborate” mean?
5. **MEDIUM** Which is stronger: one witness fifty years later, or three witnesses the next week? Why?
6. **MEDIUM** What does the Bruegel painting warn against?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Thinking confirmation means “I really, really believe it.” It means giving reasons and witnesses.
- Using witnesses who were not there.

Make it a game • Two or Three Witnesses. One player tells something that happened today. Others must find two family “witnesses” who saw it before it is “confirmed.”

Scripture. “One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.” (Deuteronomy 19:15, KJV)

God’s law required more than one witness. That is the heart of confirmation.

Practice: answers

1. An argument that a story is believable and true.
2. Clear, possible, fitting, logical, witnessed.

3. Above five hundred.
4. To back up another witness.
5. Three the next week: more witnesses, closer to the event.
6. Trusting a guide who cannot see; believing without checking.

3.2 CONFIRMING A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OBJECTIVES

- Use evidence, witnesses and records to confirm a historical event.
- Confirm that Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863.
- Tell the difference between a primary and a secondary source.

Warm-up. If someone said, “Lincoln never gave the Gettysburg Address,” what would you show him?

Video slot. Video coming. The Gettysburg Address: its history and copies (Library of Congress or National Park Service); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

primary source

A record made at the time by someone who was there: a letter, a photograph, a manuscript.

secondary source

A later account written from primary sources: a textbook, an encyclopedia.

manuscript

A document written by hand.

record

Anything that keeps a fact for later: a newspaper, a diary, an official paper.

CORE IDEAS

The account. On November 19, 1863, a cemetery for Union soldiers was dedicated at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Edward Everett gave the main speech, about two hours long. Then President Lincoln spoke for about two minutes.

The evidence. (1) *Witnesses*: thousands were there, and newspapers printed the speech within days. (2) *Records*: five copies of the speech in Lincoln’s own hand survive, named for the people he gave them to (Nicolay, Hay, Everett, Bancroft and Bliss). (3) *A photograph*: in 1952 an archivist, Josephine Cobb, found Lincoln in a photograph of the crowd taken that day.

Small differences. The five copies are not word for word the same. The earliest says “upon this continent”; the last, the Bliss copy, says “on this continent” and adds “under God.” Small differences do not weaken the confirmation: they show real documents, not a single copied forgery. The model below is from an old transcription; its first paragraph follows the earliest copy.

The model. *Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863, opening and one sentence from the end (Project Gutenberg #4)*

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation: conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

...

The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

PICTURE STUDY



Crowd at Gettysburg with Lincoln, November 19, 1863, Photographer of the Brady studio (attributed), 1863
· Glass-plate photograph (cropped) · National Archives
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

This is the only known photograph of Lincoln at Gettysburg. It was taken about noon, before he spoke. For almost ninety years no one noticed him in it, until Josephine Cobb of the National Archives found him in 1952.

Look closely

- Look for a tall, bareheaded man near the middle. Why is he hard to find?
- What are people wearing?
- How many people can you count in one small part?

Talk about it

1. How does a photograph help confirm a story?

2. Why might a photograph be stronger evidence than a painting?

WRITING PROJECT: CONFIRMING GETTYSBURG

Write a four-paragraph confirmation that Lincoln gave the address.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- The Library of Congress “Gettysburg Address” exhibit (with a parent)

Steps

1. Paragraph 1: tell the account clearly (who, what, when, where).
2. Paragraph 2: witnesses and newspapers.
3. Paragraph 3: records: the five copies and the photograph.
4. Paragraph 4: why small differences do not weaken it; conclusion.
5. List your sources at the end.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I named at least one primary source.
- My account is clear: who, what, when, where.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the first sentence of the address.
2. List three primary and three secondary sources about Lincoln.

History note. The photograph is in the National Archives and is usually credited to the Mathew Brady studio. Lincoln is seen bareheaded near the center of the crowd.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.3 “Titles.” Italicize newspapers and books; put speeches in quotation marks or capitalize them as names.

For families. Facts are from the Library of Congress exhibit “Gettysburg Address” (the five copies, Nicolay and Bliss wording) and the National Archives’ Prologue blog on Josephine Cobb (1952). Project Gutenberg #4 is an old transcription with irregular punctuation, so the lesson quotes only two sentences that match a manuscript copy.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Primary or secondary? A newspaper of November 20, 1863, printing the speech.

1. Made at the time, by people who were there.

Answer: Primary.

Example 2. Primary or secondary? Your history textbook.

1. Written later from other sources.

Answer: Secondary.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** When did Lincoln give the Gettysburg Address?
2. **EASY** Who gave the long speech before him?
3. **EASY** How many handwritten copies survive?
4. **EASY** Who found Lincoln in the photograph, and when?
5. **MEDIUM** Why do the small differences among the copies not disprove the speech?
6. **MEDIUM** Name one primary source for your own birth.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Using only one kind of evidence.
- Calling a textbook a primary source.

Make it a game · Source Sort. Write ten sources on cards (diary, encyclopedia, photograph, movie, letter ...). Sort them into primary and secondary as fast as you can.

Scripture. “Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;” (Luke 1:2, KJV)

Luke wrote from eyewitnesses: the strongest kind of source.

Practice: answers

1. November 19, 1863.
2. Edward Everett.
3. Five.
4. Josephine Cobb, in 1952.
5. Lincoln wrote them at different times; they show real, separate documents.

6. Sample: a birth certificate or a hospital record.

3.3 LUKE THE HISTORIAN

OBJECTIVES

- Read Luke’s preface (Luke 1:1–4) and name its claims about sources.
- Explain how the Gallio inscription confirms Acts 18.
- Write a paragraph confirming Luke as a careful historian.

Warm-up. If you wanted to write a true history of your town, whom would you ask, and what would you read?

Video slot. Video coming. The Gallio inscription and the book of Acts (a Christian archaeology channel); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

preface

A short opening that tells why and how a book was written.

proconsul

The Roman governor of a province such as Achaia (southern Greece).

inscription

Words carved in stone or metal.

archaeology

The study of the past by digging up and examining what people left behind.

CORE IDEAS

Luke’s method. Luke opens his Gospel like a careful historian. He says many had written; he had “perfect understanding of all things from the very first”; his sources were “eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word”; and he wrote “in order” so that Theophilus might “know the certainty.”

Gallio. In Acts 18:12 Luke writes that Paul was brought before Gallio, “the deputy of Achaia,” at Corinth. Early in the 1900s, pieces of a stone letter from the Emperor Claudius were found at Delphi in Greece. It names Gallio as proconsul of Achaia, and its dates place him there about A.D. 51–52. Luke had the right man, the right title and the right place.

A confirmation, not a proof of everything. One inscription does not prove every word of Acts. But when the checkable details are right, the writer earns trust. That is the head “witnessed” at work: a stone witness from outside the Bible agrees with Luke.

The model. *Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 18:12 (KJV)*

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

...

And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

PICTURE STUDY



Saint Luke, El Greco, about 1610 · Oil on canvas · Hispanic Society of America, New York
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

El Greco painted the apostles and evangelists as a set. Here is Luke with the tools of a writer and painter. An old tradition says Luke was a painter; Scripture tells us he was a physician (Colossians 4:14) and a careful writer.

Look closely

- What is Luke holding?
- Look at his eyes. Is he thinking, praying or working?
- What colors did El Greco use?

Talk about it

1. How does El Greco show a careful man?

2. Write one sentence about Luke the historian that you could prove from Luke 1:1-4.

WRITING PROJECT: LUKE ON THE WITNESS STAND

Write a short confirmation that Luke was a careful historian.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A KJV Bible

Steps

1. Paragraph 1: Luke's method, from Luke 1:1-4 (quote one phrase exactly).
2. Paragraph 2: the Gallio inscription and Acts 18:12.
3. Paragraph 3: conclusion: why checkable details earn trust.
4. Read it aloud.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I quoted Scripture exactly with references.
- I explained what the inscription shows and what it does not.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Luke 1:3-4.
2. Write the facts about the Gallio inscription in a short list.

History note. The Delphi fragments were published in the early 1900s and are the main fixed point for dating Paul's stay in Corinth (Acts 18).

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.1 "Commas with Introductory Words, Direct Address and Appositives." "Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, ..." is an appositive.

For families. Gallio inscription: Delphi Archaeological Museum; a letter of Claudius naming Gallio as proconsul, dated by its imperial titles to about A.D. 51-52. The outline's Caravaggio is replaced (see 3.1). El Greco's *Saint Luke* was checked on Commons for license and by eye.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. What does Luke say about his sources?

1. Look at verse 2.

Answer: They were “eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word.”

Example 2. Why does the Gallio inscription matter for dating Paul?

1. It places Gallio in Achaia about A.D. 51-52.

Answer: Since Paul stood before Gallio, Paul was in Corinth about A.D. 51-52. It is one of the firmest dates in Paul’s life.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** To whom did Luke write?
2. **EASY** What was Gallio’s office?
3. **EASY** Where was the inscription found?
4. **EASY** About when was Gallio proconsul?
5. **MEDIUM** Which head of confirmation does the inscription support?
6. **MEDIUM** What was Luke’s other job, according to Colossians 4:14?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Saying the inscription “proves the Bible.” It confirms one detail and shows Luke’s care.
- Misquoting Luke’s preface.

Make it a game • Detail Detective. The parent reads a short story with five checkable details (names, places). The student lists which details could be checked and how.

Scripture. “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” (Luke 1:3-4, KJV)

Luke wrote so that we “might know the certainty.”

Practice: answers

1. Theophilus.
2. Proconsul (deputy) of Achaia.
3. At Delphi, in Greece.

4. About A.D. 51–52.
5. Witnessed (and clear): an outside record agrees.
6. Physician.

3.4 WRITING A CONFIRMATION ★

OBJECTIVES

- Write a five-paragraph confirmation of a historical account.
- Confirm the Pilgrims' 1621 harvest celebration from Edward Winslow's letter.
- Use at least three heads and name the primary source.

Warm-up. What do you know about the first Thanksgiving? Where did you learn it?

Video slot. Video coming. The Pilgrims' 1621 harvest, from Pilgrim Hall Museum or Plimoth Patuxet; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

Mourt's Relation

A 1622 booklet of Pilgrim journals and letters, printed in London.

Edward Winslow

A Pilgrim leader who wrote the only eyewitness account of the 1621 harvest feast.

Massasoit

The leader of the Wampanoag, who made peace with the Pilgrims in 1621.

fowling

Hunting birds.

CORE IDEAS

The account. In the fall of 1621 the Pilgrims at Plymouth celebrated their first harvest. Massasoit came with about ninety men; they feasted for three days.

The witness. Edward Winslow wrote a letter dated December 11, 1621, describing it. It was printed in London in 1622 in *Mourt's Relation*. He was there; he wrote within weeks; he names the governor, Massasoit and the numbers. Governor Bradford's later history agrees that there was plenty that fall.

Arrange it. (1) The account told clearly. (2) Clear: Winslow names who, when and what. (3) Possible and fitting: harvest feasts were common in England; the Pilgrims thanked God. (4) Witnessed: Winslow's letter, written that year, and Bradford. (5) Conclusion: what we know, and what later stories added (pilgrim buckles, a fixed menu).

The model. *Edward Winslow, letter of December 11, 1621, in Mourt's Relation (1622; Project Gutenberg #66359)*

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

PICTURE STUDY



Embarkation of the Pilgrims, Robert Walter Weir, 1857 (smaller version of the 1843 Capitol painting) · Oil on canvas · Brooklyn Museum, New York
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Robert Weir painted the Pilgrims praying on the deck of the *Speedwell* in Holland in 1620, before they sailed. Their pastor, John Robinson, lifts his eyes; an open Bible lies in the center. Weir based the scene on the Pilgrims' own writings.

Look closely

- Find the open Bible. Who is near it?
- Find the rainbow. What does it remind you of?
- Look at the faces. Are they afraid or hopeful?

Talk about it

1. How did the Pilgrims' faith shape how they wrote about their harvest?
2. Write one confirmed fact and one painter's guess about this scene.

WRITING PROJECT: CONFIRMING THE HARVEST OF 1621

Write a five-paragraph confirmation from Winslow's letter.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Notes from 3.1–3.3

Steps

1. Paragraph 1: the account, clearly.
2. Paragraph 2: clear (names, dates, numbers from Winslow).
3. Paragraph 3: possible and fitting.
4. Paragraph 4: witnessed (Winslow, then Bradford).
5. Paragraph 5: conclusion; note what later stories added.
6. Quote Winslow exactly at least once.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I used at least three heads.
- I named the primary source and its date.
- I quoted exactly.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Winslow's sentence about God's goodness.
2. List three facts Winslow gives and three things he does not say.

History note. Weir's great *Embarkation of the Pilgrims* (1843) is one of eight large history paintings in the Capitol Rotunda. The picture shown is his smaller 1857 version, now in the Brooklyn Museum.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.4 "Semicolons and Colons." Winslow's long sentences use commas and semicolons; try one colon to introduce a list of evidence.

For families. Facts: Pilgrim Hall Museum, "Primary Sources for 'The First Thanksgiving' at Plymouth"; Winslow's letter dated December 11, 1621. Some modern pictures of the feast show native men bare-chested, so the picture study uses Weir's fully clothed *Embarkation* instead.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Write the “clear” head.

1. Pull names and numbers from the letter.

Answer: Winslow’s account is clear: he says the governor sent four men fowling, that Massasoit came with about ninety men, and that they feasted three days.

Example 2. What does Winslow not say?

1. Look for things later stories add.

Answer: He does not mention turkey by name, pumpkin pie or a holiday called Thanksgiving.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Who wrote the eyewitness account of the 1621 harvest?
2. **EASY** In what booklet was it printed, and when?
3. **EASY** How many men came with Massasoit?
4. **EASY** How long did the feast last?
5. **MEDIUM** Why is Winslow a strong witness?
6. **MEDIUM** Name one thing later stories added.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Adding details from modern pictures as if they were in the letter.
- Forgetting to name the source.

Make it a game • In the Letter?. The parent reads ten details about the first Thanksgiving. Players say “In the letter” or “Added later,” then check the model.

Scripture. “Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.” (Psalm 65:11, KJV)

Winslow thanked God’s goodness for the harvest; the psalmist did the same.

Practice: answers

1. Edward Winslow.
2. Mourt’s Relation, 1622.
3. About ninety.
4. Three days.

5. He was there, wrote within weeks, and gave names and numbers.
6. Sample: pie, buckled hats, or a fixed menu.

UNIT 3 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) Define confirmation.
2. (5 pts) Name the five heads of confirmation.
3. (2 pts) What is a primary source?
4. (3 pts) What does the Gallio inscription confirm?
5. (2 pts) Who wrote the eyewitness account of the 1621 harvest?
6. (2 pts) Write one sentence of the “witnessed” head for any event you saw.

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: A CONFIRMATION

Copy your five-paragraph confirmation (3.4) with a title and a source list.

- **Heads:** At least three heads, each in its own paragraph.
- **Sources:** The primary source named, dated and quoted exactly.
- **Honesty:** Separates what the source says from later additions.
- **Mechanics:** Appositives, semicolons and colons correct.

Answer key

1. An argument that a story is believable and true.
2. Clear, possible, fitting, logical, witnessed.
3. A record made at the time by someone who was there.
4. That Gallio was proconsul of Achaia about A.D. 51-52, as Acts 18:12 says.
5. Edward Winslow.
6. Answers vary.

STORY: CONFLICT AND PLOT

The creative track: conflict and plot. You will study man against nature (Jack London), man against man (Robin Hood and the Sheriff), man against himself (Edmund and the Prodigal Son), and then write a complete short story on the five-part plot mountain.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Writes dialogue with correct quotation marks (Grade 5).

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can name the three kinds of conflict.
- ☐ I can name and find the five parts of plot.
- ☐ I can show a character's thoughts and motives.
- ☐ I can write a complete short story.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Pyle, The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood (Project Gutenberg #10148)** (<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10148>): Free.
- **C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** (<https://www.narnia.com>): Any library copy; read together.

4.1 MAN AGAINST NATURE 🍷 ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define conflict and name the three kinds: against nature, against man, against himself.
- Find the conflict and the warning signs in the opening of “To Build a Fire.”
- Write a one-page scene of a person against nature.

Warm-up. Tell about the coldest, wettest or hottest you have ever been. What did you do about it?

Video slot. Video coming. Story conflict for middle school (man vs. nature, man vs. man, man vs. self); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

conflict

The struggle at the heart of a story. Without conflict there is no story.

man against nature

A struggle with cold, storm, sea, wilderness or wild animals.

setting

Where and when a story happens; in a nature story, the setting is the enemy.

foreshadowing

Hints early in a story of what will come.

CORE IDEAS

No conflict, no story. “A boy went to the store and bought bread” is not a story. “A boy went to the store in a blizzard” begins one. Conflict is what the main character struggles against.

Three kinds. Man against nature (cold, sea, storm); man against man (an enemy); man against himself (fear, pride, temptation). Many stories have more than one.

London’s cold. Jack London’s story opens with a man walking alone on the Yukon trail at seventy-five below zero (he learns it later). Notice the warnings: no sun, “cold and grey,” and then the sentence that tells us his real danger: “The trouble with him was that he was without imagination.” He sees the cold but does not think about what it means.

The model. Jack London, “To Build a Fire” (1908), opening, in *Lost Face* (1910; Project Gutenberg #2429)

Day had broken cold and grey, exceedingly cold and grey, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth-bank, where a dim

and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days must pass before that cheerful orb, due south, would just peep above the sky-line and dip immediately from view.

The man flung a look back along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle undulations where the ice-jams of the freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island.

PICTURE STUDY



Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps, J. M. W. Turner, 1812 · Oil on canvas · Tate Britain, London

Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

In 218 B.C. the general Hannibal led his army and elephants over the Alps to attack Rome. Turner painted the storm, not the general: a black arc of cloud swallows the sky, and the soldiers are tiny. You can hardly find Hannibal at all.

Look closely

- Where is the sun? How bright is it?
- Find the soldiers. How big are they compared with the storm?
- Which way is the storm moving?

Talk about it

1. How does Turner show that nature is the enemy?
2. Write three sentences from the point of view of one small soldier.

WRITING PROJECT: A PERSON AGAINST NATURE

Write a one-page scene (about 250 words) of a person struggling against nature.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose the danger: cold, flood, storm, heat, a lost trail.
2. Open with the setting, as London does, with one warning sign.
3. Show what the person does, step by step.
4. Let the danger grow.
5. End the scene with the person safe or still struggling (no gore).
6. Read it aloud.

Check your work

- The conflict is clear by the third sentence.
- There is at least one warning sign.
- Verbs are strong and specific.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy London's sentence about imagination.
2. List three "nature against man" stories you know (Bible: Jonah, Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27).

History note. "To Build a Fire" was published in *The Century Magazine* in 1908 and collected in *Lost Face* (1910). Turner's *Snow Storm* was first shown at the Royal Academy in 1812.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 14.3 "Adjective and Adverb Phrases." London stacks phrases: "along the way he had come," "under three feet of ice."

For families. In “To Build a Fire” the man dies of cold at the end. The lesson quotes only the opening; read the rest yourself before sharing it. London wrote an earlier, gentler version for boys in 1902, in which the man survives.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Name the conflict: Paul’s ship in a storm for fourteen days (Acts 27).

1. Who or what is the enemy?

Answer: Man against nature (the sea and storm).

Example 2. Find a warning sign in the model.

1. Look for hints of danger.

Answer: “There was no sun nor hint of sun.” The cold is deeper than the man thinks.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is conflict?
2. **EASY** Name the three kinds of conflict.
3. **EASY** Where does “To Build a Fire” take place?
4. **EASY** What is foreshadowing?
5. **MEDIUM** What is the man’s real weakness, says London?
6. **MEDIUM** Which kind of conflict is Jonah in the storm?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Describing the setting with no struggle.
- Rushing to the rescue in one sentence.

Make it a game · Name That Conflict. The parent names a story (Noah, David and Goliath, Robinson Crusoe, the Prodigal Son). Players call out the kind of conflict.

Scripture. “And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us , all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.” (Acts 27:20, KJV)

Paul’s shipwreck is a man-against-nature story in Scripture, and God brings everyone safe to land (Acts 27:44).

Practice: answers

1. The struggle at the heart of a story.

2. Man against nature, against man, against himself.
3. On a trail in the Yukon, in deep winter.
4. Hints of what will come.
5. He lacked imagination: he did not think about what the cold meant.
6. Against nature, and also against himself (running from God).

4.2 MAN AGAINST MAN 🍌

OBJECTIVES

- Describe a conflict between two characters with opposing goals.
- Trace the struggle between Robin Hood and the Sheriff in Pyle’s tale.
- Write a scene in which two characters want opposite things.

Warm-up. Two brothers want the last piece of pie. Name two ways the story could end.

Video slot. Video coming. Robin Hood, a classic retelling for children; preview first (choose a version that does not glorify cruelty). Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

protagonist

The main character, whose struggle we follow.

antagonist

The character who works against the protagonist.

motive

The reason a character wants what he wants.

irony

When what happens is the opposite of what a character expects.

CORE IDEAS

Two wills. A man-against-man conflict needs two characters who want opposite things. In Pyle’s story the greedy Sheriff hopes to cheat a simple butcher out of his cattle. The “butcher” is really Robin Hood.

Irony. The Sheriff thinks he is the hunter, but he is the one being caught. Watch his mood change in the model: laughing, then quiet, then afraid. Pyle shows the conflict through the Sheriff’s thoughts.

Motive matters. The best antagonists have reasons. The Sheriff is greedy and has “plotted against their lives more than once.” Robin wants to shame him, not to kill him.

The model. *Howard Pyle, The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood (1883), “Robin Hood Turns Butcher” (Project Gutenberg #10148)*

But still they traveled deeper into the forest shades, and the deeper they went, the more quiet grew the Sheriff. At last they came to where the road took a sudden bend, and before them a herd of dun deer went tripping across the path.

Then Robin Hood came close to the Sheriff and pointing his finger, he said, "These are my horned beasts, good Master Sheriff. How dost thou like them? Are they not fat and fair to see?"

At this the Sheriff drew rein quickly. "Now fellow," quoth he, "I would I were well out of this forest, for I like not thy company. Go thou thine own path, good friend, and let me but go mine."

But Robin only laughed and caught the Sheriff's bridle rein. "Nay," cried he, "stay awhile, for I would thou shouldst see my brothers, who own these fair horned beasts with me." So saying, he clapped his bugle to his mouth and winded three merry notes, and presently up the path came leaping fivescore good stout yeomen with Little John at their head.

"What wouldst thou have, good master?" quoth Little John.

"Why," answered Robin, "dost thou not see that I have brought goodly company to feast with us today? Fye, for shame! Do you not see our good and worshipful master, the Sheriff of Nottingham? Take thou his bridle, Little John, for he has honored us today by coming to feast with us."

Then all doffed their hats humbly, without smiling or seeming to be in jest, while Little John took the bridle rein and led the palfrey still deeper into the forest, all marching in order, with Robin Hood walking beside the Sheriff, hat in hand.

PICTURE STUDY



Robin Hood Meeteth the Tall Stranger on the Bridge, Howard Pyle, 1883 · Pen-and-ink illustration · From *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (New York, 1883)
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Howard Pyle wrote and drew his own Robin Hood. Here Robin meets a tall stranger on a narrow bridge. Neither will step aside, so they fight with quarterstaves. The stranger wins, and becomes Little John, Robin's best friend.

Look closely

- Who looks stronger? How does Pyle show it?
- How wide is the bridge?
- Find the details Pyle drew carefully: leaves, water, clothing.

Talk about it

1. This conflict ends in friendship. How?
2. Write the first line each man says.

WRITING PROJECT: TWO WILLS

Write a scene (about 250 words) in which two characters want opposite things.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose two characters and what each wants.

2. Give each a motive.
3. Write the scene with dialogue (correct quotation marks).
4. Show one character's thoughts, as Pyle does.
5. End with a turn: someone wins, or both change.

Check your work

- Each character wants something clear.
- I showed a motive for each.
- Quotation marks and commas in dialogue are correct.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the Sheriff's thought from the model.
2. Write the protagonist, antagonist and motive for David and Goliath.

History note. Howard Pyle (1853–1911) published *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1883 with his own drawings. He later taught N. C. Wyeth.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 “Quotation Marks and Dialogue.”

For families. Robin Hood is an outlaw of legend. Pyle's Robin robs the greedy and the corrupt; talk with your child about why theft is still wrong (Exodus 20:15) even when the victim is a villain. Pyle's text is Project Gutenberg #10148.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Protagonist and antagonist in the model?

1. Whose side are we on? Who works against him?

Answer: Protagonist: Robin Hood. Antagonist: the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Example 2. Where is the irony?

1. What does the Sheriff expect?

Answer: He expects to cheat a fool; instead he is led into Robin's forest as a “guest.”

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is an antagonist?

2. **EASY** What is the Sheriff's motive?
3. **EASY** How does the Sheriff's mood change?
4. **EASY** Who wrote and illustrated this Robin Hood?
5. **MEDIUM** Define irony with an example from the model.
6. **MEDIUM** Name a man-against-man conflict in the Bible.

COMMON MISTAKES

- A villain with no reason.
- Dialogue with no tags, so the reader loses track of the speaker.

Make it a game · Bridge Standoff. Two players stand on a "bridge" (a tape line). Each must give a good reason to cross first. The family judges the better motive.

Scripture. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21, KJV)

Many great conflicts end when good overcomes evil, as Little John's fight ended in friendship.

Practice: answers

1. The character who works against the protagonist.
2. Greed: he hopes to cheat the butcher.
3. From laughing to quiet to afraid.
4. Howard Pyle.
5. What happens is the opposite of what is expected: the Sheriff, who meant to trap, is trapped.
6. Sample: David and Goliath; Joseph and his brothers; Elijah and Ahab.

4.3 MAN AGAINST HIMSELF

OBJECTIVES

- Describe an inner conflict: a character struggling with his own sin, fear or pride.
- Trace Edmund's inner conflict in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (summarized).
- Compare it with the Prodigal Son, who “came to himself.”

Warm-up. Have you ever known what was right and wanted to do the opposite? What did the struggle feel like? (Keep it private if you like.)

Video slot. Video coming. The Prodigal Son for children (a Bible story video); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

inner conflict

A struggle inside a character: between right and wrong, fear and courage.

temptation

A pull toward doing wrong.

repentance

Turning away from sin and back to God.

turning point

The moment the character decides.

CORE IDEAS

The hardest enemy. Man against himself is the conflict of a person who must overcome his own sin, fear or pride. Readers love it because they know it.

Edmund (a summary). In C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), Edmund meets the White Witch, who gives him enchanted Turkish Delight and promises to make him a prince. He wants more, and he resents his brother Peter. He lies about having been in Narnia and later goes to the Witch to betray his brother and sisters. Lewis shows his excuses: he tells himself she is not really so bad. When he sees the Witch's cruelty, his heart begins to turn. Aslan rescues him and, at great cost, pays for his treachery. Edmund comes back changed. (This course summarizes Lewis's book because it is still under copyright. Read it as a family.)

The pattern. Temptation, excuses, a fall, a turning point, and rescue or repentance. The Prodigal Son in Luke 15 follows it: he wastes everything, “came to himself,” and goes home.

The model. *Luke 15:17–20 (KJV), the Prodigal Son*

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

PICTURE STUDY



The Return of the Prodigal Son, Rembrandt van Rijn, about 1668 · Oil on canvas · State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Late in his life, Rembrandt painted the moment the prodigal son comes home. The son kneels in torn clothes, his shoes worn through. His father bends over him with both hands on his back. The older brother stands to the right, stiff and unsmiling.

Look closely

- Look at the father's two hands. Are they the same?
- What do the son's shoes and clothes tell you?
- Find the older brother. How does he feel?

Talk about it

1. Where is the turning point of the story: in the far country or here?
2. Write three sentences of the son's thoughts on the road home.

WRITING PROJECT: AN INNER STRUGGLE

Write a scene (about 250 words) of a character in an inner conflict.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose a temptation: to lie, to cheat, to quit, to take what is not his.
2. Show the excuses he makes to himself (thoughts in italics or plain).
3. Bring him to a turning point.
4. End with his choice and one result.
5. Keep it a made-up character, not a real friend.

Check your work

- The reader can see both sides of the struggle.
- There is a clear turning point.
- Thoughts are punctuated clearly.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Luke 15:18.
2. List the five steps of the pattern: temptation, excuses, fall, turning point, rescue or repentance.

History note. Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son* (about 1668) was painted near the end of his life and is in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.2 "Troublesome Verbs: lie and lay, sit and set, rise and raise." "I will arise and go" uses *arise* correctly.

For families. C. S. Lewis's books are in copyright, so the lesson gives a summary and no quotation. Read chapters 4, 9 and 13 of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* together if you can. The picture study uses Rembrandt, not the book's illustrations, which are also in copyright.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Where is the turning point in Luke 15?

1. Find the change of mind.

Answer: “And when he came to himself, he said ...” (verse 17).

Example 2. Write an excuse a tempted character might make.

1. Make it sound reasonable to him.

Answer: Sample: “Everyone else copies homework. It isn’t really cheating if I change a few words.”

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is an inner conflict?
2. **EASY** What did the Witch give Edmund?
3. **EASY** What does “came to himself” mean?
4. **EASY** Who wrote *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, and when?
5. **MEDIUM** Why does the course summarize Lewis instead of quoting him?
6. **MEDIUM** Name the five steps of the pattern.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Telling the reader “He felt guilty” instead of showing his thoughts and actions.
- Skipping the turning point.

Make it a game • Excuse Court. The parent states an excuse (“It’s not stealing if nobody misses it”). Players answer it with a verse or a reason.

Scripture. “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20, KJV)

The father ran to meet the son. Every man-against-himself story points to our need of grace.

Practice: answers

1. A struggle inside a character.
2. Enchanted Turkish Delight and a promise to make him a prince.
3. He saw the truth about himself; he came to his senses.
4. C. S. Lewis, 1950.

5. His book is still under copyright.
6. Temptation, excuses, fall, turning point, rescue or repentance.

4.4 THE PLOT MOUNTAIN

OBJECTIVES

- Name the five parts of plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
- Map a sample story on the plot mountain.
- Write a complete short story (500–700 words) on the five-part plot.

Warm-up. Draw a mountain. At the bottom left write “Once upon a time.” Where would the most exciting moment go?

Video slot. Video coming. The plot diagram (Freytag’s pyramid) for middle school; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

exposition

The opening: characters, setting and the normal situation.

rising action

Events that build the conflict and raise the stakes.

climax

The turning point, the moment of highest tension and decision.

falling action and resolution

What happens because of the climax, and how things settle.

CORE IDEAS

The mountain. A German writer, Gustav Freytag, drew plot as a mountain in 1863. Up the left side climbs the rising action; the peak is the climax; down the right side comes the falling action to the resolution.

Read the sample. In “The Late Ferry” each part is labeled. The exposition gives Grandpa’s rule; the rising action breaks it and adds a storm; the climax is a choice; the falling action and resolution show the result and the lesson.

Choose your conflict. Your story may be against nature, against another person, or against oneself, or all three, like the sample (a storm, and Ben’s own disobedience).

The model. *Sample story, written for this course*

A sample story on the plot mountain, written for this course.

The Late Ferry

(Exposition) Every Saturday, twelve-year-old Ben rowed his grandfather's skiff across Miller's Pond to the store. Grandpa had one rule: "Back before the whistle at the mill."

(Rising action) This Saturday Ben stayed to watch a checkers game. When he came out, the sky over the hills had turned the color of a bruise. He pushed off anyway. Halfway across, the wind swung round and the waves began to slap over the bow. An oarlock popped loose.

(Climax) Ben could turn downwind toward the reeds, far from home but safe, or fight straight across to the dock where Grandpa would be waiting. He thought of the rule he had broken. He turned for the reeds.

(Falling action) He ran the skiff into the cattails, tied it to a stump, and walked the long way round the shore in the rain. A lantern was coming down the path to meet him.

(Resolution) Grandpa said only, "You chose right at the end. Next time, choose right at the start." Ben hung the oarlock on a nail by the door, where he would see it every Saturday.

PICTURE STUDY



The Voyage of Life: Manhood, Thomas Cole, 1842 · Oil on canvas · National Gallery of Art, Washington
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Thomas Cole painted four pictures of a voyage down the river of life: childhood, youth, manhood and old age. In the third, the man's boat has lost its rudder. He prays as the

current pulls him toward the rapids, and his guardian angel watches from above, unseen by him.

Look closely

- Where is the boat headed?
- Find the angel. Does the man see him?
- What is missing from the boat?

Talk about it

1. This painting is the climax of Cole's series. How can you tell?
2. Write the falling action: what happens next?

WRITING PROJECT: A STORY ON THE MOUNTAIN

Write a short story of 500–700 words on the five-part plot.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- A plot mountain drawing

Steps

1. Draw the mountain and plan one or two sentences for each part.
2. Exposition: who, where, the normal situation.
3. Rising action: at least three events that make it harder.
4. Climax: a choice or a turning point.
5. Falling action and resolution: the result.
6. Revise for strong verbs, clear dialogue, and one tense.

Check your work

- All five parts are present.
- The climax is a real turning point.
- The story stays in one tense.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Draw and label the plot mountain.
2. Map the Prodigal Son on it.

History note. Thomas Cole painted *The Voyage of Life* twice; the 1842 set is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.1 “Coordinating and Correlative Conjunctions.” Join rising-action events with *and*, *but* and *so* to keep the pace moving.

For families. The sample story was written for this course. Stories should avoid gore and crude language; conflict can be strong without them.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Map David and Goliath.

1. Find each part.

Answer: Exposition: armies face off. Rising: Goliath taunts forty days; David arrives; refuses armor. Climax: the stone strikes. Falling: the Philistines flee. Resolution: Israel is saved; David is honored.

Example 2. Where is the climax in “The Late Ferry”?

1. Find the choice.

Answer: Ben chooses the reeds over the dock.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Name the five parts of plot.
2. **EASY** Which part has the highest tension?
3. **EASY** Who drew plot as a pyramid?
4. **EASY** What happens in the exposition?
5. **MEDIUM** Map the Prodigal Son’s climax.
6. **MEDIUM** What two conflicts are in “The Late Ferry”?

COMMON MISTAKES

- A long exposition with no conflict.
- A climax that happens by luck instead of by choice.

Make it a game • Plot Mountain Climb. Tape a mountain on the floor. A player tells a story one part per step, climbing up and down.

Scripture. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28, KJV)

In God’s providence even the hardest climax works toward a good resolution for his children.

Practice: answers

1. Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
2. The climax.
3. Gustav Freytag (1863).
4. We meet the characters, setting and normal situation.
5. He comes to himself and decides to go home (Luke 15:17-18).
6. Against nature (the storm) and against himself (disobedience).

UNIT 4 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (3 pts) Name the three kinds of conflict.
2. (2 pts) What is an antagonist?
3. (5 pts) Name the five parts of plot.
4. (2 pts) What was the man's weakness in "To Build a Fire"?
5. (3 pts) What is Edmund's inner conflict?

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: A SHORT STORY

Your finished 500-700 word story (4.4), typed or neatly copied, with a title.

- **Plot:** All five parts; a real climax.
- **Conflict:** Clear, with a motive.
- **Style:** Strong verbs, clear dialogue, one tense.
- **Mechanics:** Grammar Level 2 skills applied.

Answer key

1. Man against nature, man against man, man against himself.
2. The character who works against the protagonist.
3. Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
4. He lacked imagination.
5. Between his greed and resentment and loyalty to his family; he betrays them, then turns back.

POETRY: IMAGERY

The creative track: imagery. You will read Tennyson's "The Eagle," find similes and metaphors in the Psalms, see creation personified in Isaiah and the Psalms, and write an image poem from a great American landscape painting.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Knows rhyme and stanza (Grades 3–5).

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can define and find imagery, simile, metaphor and personification.
- ☐ I can choose exact verbs and nouns.
- ☐ I can write a poem from close looking at a painting.
- ☐ I can revise by reading aloud.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Tennyson, Early Poems (Project Gutenberg #8601)**
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8601>): For parents.

5.1 PICTURES IN WORDS 🍷 ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define imagery: words that make pictures and sensations in the reader’s mind.
- Find the images in Tennyson’s “The Eagle.”
- Write a six-line image poem about an animal.

Warm-up. Close your eyes. Your parent says “eagle.” What do you see? Now he says “He clasps the crag with hooked hands.” What do you see now?

Video slot. Video coming. A golden eagle or bald eagle hunting (a nature film); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

imagery

Words that appeal to the senses and make pictures in the mind.

crag

A steep, rough rock or cliff.

azure

Sky blue.

fragment

A short piece, or a poem the poet left short on purpose.

CORE IDEAS

Six lines, one picture. Tennyson’s “The Eagle” has only six lines and two rhymes, yet readers remember it for life. Every line is a picture: the claws on the rock, the sun, the blue world, the sea far below, the dive.

Exact words. “Clasps” is better than “holds.” “Crawls” makes the sea look tiny and slow from high above. “Wrinkled” makes the waves look like old skin. Imagery is made from exact nouns and verbs more than from adjectives.

Sound helps. Say the first line aloud: “clasps the crag with ... hands.” The hard *c* and *k* sounds are rough like rock. In line 6 the poem ends with a sudden fall, like the eagle.

The model. *Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Eagle” (1851), in The Early Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson, ed. J. C. Collins (Project Gutenberg #8601)*

He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,

Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

PICTURE STUDY



Golden Eagle, John James Audubon, painted 1833; engraved by Robert Havell for *The Birds of America* · Hand-colored engraving (plate 181) · From *The Birds of America* (scan via the Digital Public Library of America)

Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Audubon painted this golden eagle in Boston in 1833 from a live bird. He set it high above snowy mountain peaks, carrying its prey. The plate is life-size.

Look closely

- Find the talons. What are they holding?
- Look at the mountains. How high is the eagle?
- Which part of the bird did Audubon paint most carefully?

Talk about it

1. Which line of Tennyson fits this picture best?
2. Write two lines of your own about this eagle.

WRITING PROJECT: SIX LINES OF PICTURES

Write a six-line image poem about one animal, in the shape of “The Eagle.”

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose an animal you have watched closely.
2. List ten exact verbs for what it does.
3. Write two three-line stanzas. Try to rhyme each stanza on one sound, as Tennyson does.
4. Cross out weak adjectives and use stronger verbs and nouns.
5. Read aloud and listen for the sounds.

Check your work

- Every line makes a picture.
- I used at least three exact verbs.
- Each line begins with a capital letter.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy “The Eagle” and underline the verbs.
2. Write five exact verbs for a cat or dog.

History note. Tennyson first published “The Eagle” in 1851. Audubon painted the golden eagle in Boston in 1833; Robert Havell engraved it as plate 181 of *The Birds of America*.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 14.1 “Adjective or Adverb?” Tennyson uses few adjectives; find each one and ask what it does.

For families. This Gutenberg edition prints “hooked hands”; many anthologies print “crooked hands.” The course prints its source exactly. The Audubon plate shows the eagle carrying a hare, its prey.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Make it a picture: “The bird was high up.”

1. Use a verb and a noun the reader can see.

Answer: The hawk hangs on the wind above the barn.

Example 2. Why “crawls” for the sea?

1. From high up, waves look small and slow.

Answer: The sea looks like something creeping far below; it shows how high the eagle is.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is imagery?
2. **EASY** How many lines are in “The Eagle”?
3. **EASY** What does “azure” mean?
4. **EASY** What is the eagle compared to in the last line?
5. **MEDIUM** Why is “clasps” better than “holds”?
6. **MEDIUM** What is the rhyme scheme?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Piling up adjectives (“big, huge, giant”) instead of finding one exact noun or verb.
- Telling feelings (“it was amazing”) instead of showing pictures.

Make it a game • Picture It. One player says a plain sentence (“The dog ran”). Others race to make it a picture (“The setter streaked across the stubble”).

Scripture. “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.” (Job 39:27-28, KJV)

God himself paints the eagle on the crag in words, long before Tennyson.

Practice: answers

1. Words that make pictures and sensations in the reader’s mind.
2. Six.
3. Sky blue.
4. A thunderbolt.
5. It is exact: it shows a tight grip with claws.
6. AAA BBB.

5.2 SIMILE AND METAPHOR

OBJECTIVES

- Define simile and metaphor and tell them apart.
- Find similes and metaphors in the Psalms (“The LORD is my rock”).
- Write five similes and five metaphors.

Warm-up. Finish: “The baby was as quiet as ...” “My brother is a ...”

Video slot. Video coming. Simile and metaphor for middle school; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

simile

A comparison using *like* or *as*: “like a tree planted by the rivers of water.”

metaphor

A comparison that says one thing *is* another: “The LORD is my rock.”

vehicle

The thing used for comparison (rock).

tenor

The thing being described (the LORD).

CORE IDEAS

Two ways to compare. A simile says “like” or “as”: the righteous man is “like a tree” (Psalm 1:3). A metaphor drops the word and says “is”: “The LORD is my rock” (Psalm 18:2).

Why David used rocks. David hid from Saul in rocky wilderness strongholds. When he called God his rock, fortress and high tower, he chose things he had leaned on to save his life. Good comparisons come from what the writer knows.

Fresh, not tired. “Quiet as a mouse” is tired from overuse. Look at the world and make your own: “quiet as snow on a fence rail.”

The model. *Psalm 18:1–2 and Psalm 42:1 (KJV)*

I will love thee, O LORD , my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress,
and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the
horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

...

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

PICTURE STUDY



Among the Sierra Nevada, California, Albert Bierstadt, 1868 · Oil on canvas · Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Albert Bierstadt traveled west and painted the Sierra Nevada as a place of grandeur. The great rock walls rise from a still lake; light breaks through the clouds; small deer drink at the shore.

Look closely

- Find the deer. How big are they beside the cliffs?
- Where does the light come from?
- What is still and what is moving?

Talk about it

1. Write a metaphor about the cliffs ("The cliff is ...").
2. Which verse from Psalm 18 fits this painting?

WRITING PROJECT: TEN COMPARISONS

Write five similes and five metaphors, then use your best one in a four-line poem.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose five things from your home or yard.
2. Write a simile for each (like or as).
3. Turn each into a metaphor (is).
4. Circle your freshest comparison.
5. Write a four-line poem built on it.

Check your work

- I wrote five similes and five metaphors.
- No tired comparisons (quiet as a mouse).
- Each line begins with a capital letter.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Psalm 18:2 and mark each metaphor.
2. Copy Psalm 42:1 and mark the simile.

History note. Bierstadt painted *Among the Sierra Nevada, California* in 1868 in Rome and showed it in Europe before it came to America. It is in the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 13.3 “Predicate Nominatives.” In “The LORD is my rock,” *rock* is a predicate nominative. Metaphors often use one.

For families. David’s wilderness strongholds are in 1 Samuel 23–24. Scripture is printed from the offline King James text.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Simile or metaphor? “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee.”

1. It uses “as.”

Answer: Simile.

Example 2. Turn into a metaphor: “The fog was like a gray blanket.”

1. Drop “like”; say “was.”

Answer: The fog was a gray blanket over the town.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a simile?
2. **EASY** What is a metaphor?
3. **EASY** Name four metaphors for God in Psalm 18:2.
4. **EASY** What is the hart in Psalm 42:1?
5. **MEDIUM** Why did David think of God as a rock?
6. **MEDIUM** Write a fresh simile for snow.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Calling any sentence with “like” a simile (“I like pie” is not one).
- Mixing two metaphors in one line.

Make it a game · Simile Swap. One player says a simile. The next turns it into a metaphor. The next makes a fresh one on the same subject.

Scripture. “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” (Psalm 1:3, KJV)

A simile from the first psalm: the righteous man is like a tree by the water.

Practice: answers

1. A comparison using like or as.
2. A comparison that says one thing is another.
3. Rock, fortress, deliverer, buckler, horn, high tower (any four).
4. A deer.
5. He had hidden among rocks and strongholds to save his life.
6. Sample: Snow lay on the fence rails like sugar on a pie crust.

5.3 PERSONIFICATION

OBJECTIVES

- Define personification.
- Find it in Isaiah 55:12 and Psalm 98:7–8.
- Write a short poem that gives a thing of nature human actions.

Warm-up. What would the wind say if it could talk? What would a river do if it had hands?

Video slot. Video coming. Personification in poetry for middle school; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

personification

Giving human actions or feelings to something that is not human: “the floods clap their hands.”

apostrophe

Speaking to a thing or absent person as if it could hear: “O sea ...”

praise

In the Psalms, all creation is called to praise God.

literal

What words mean exactly, not as a figure.

CORE IDEAS

Things that act like people. When Isaiah says the trees “shall clap their hands,” he does not mean trees have hands. He means creation itself will seem to rejoice. That is personification.

Creation’s praise. The Psalms often personify creation: the sea roars, the floods clap, the hills sing. These are not pagan nature spirits. They show that all creation serves its Maker.

Use it with care. Personification is strong in small amounts. One action (“the wind shouldered the door open”) is better than a whole talking forest.

The model. *Isaiah 55:12 and Psalm 98:7–8 (KJV)*

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

...

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together

PICTURE STUDY



Niagara, Frederic Edwin Church, 1857 · Oil on canvas · National Gallery of Art, Washington
Wikimedia Commons · CC0

Frederic Church painted Niagara as if the viewer stood right at the edge of the falls, with no railing and no people. The canvas is more than seven feet wide. When it was first shown in New York in 1857, crowds lined up to see it.

Look closely

- Where are you standing as you look?
- Find the rainbow.
- What color is the water at the brink?

Talk about it

1. If the falls could speak, what would they say? Write one line.
2. Give the falls one human action (they shout, they bow, they pour out praise).

WRITING PROJECT: CREATION SPEAKS

Write an eight-line poem in which one thing in nature acts like a person.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose one thing: a river, the wind, a mountain, a storm, an old oak.
2. List five human actions it could do.
3. Choose the two best.
4. Write eight lines, rhymed or unrhymed.
5. End by pointing to the Creator if you wish, as the Psalms do.

Check your work

- I used personification at least twice.
- My poem stays on one subject.
- Each line begins with a capital letter.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Isaiah 55:12.
2. List five verbs that only people do (clap, whisper, bow, weep, sing).

History note. Church's *Niagara* (1857) was in the Corcoran Gallery for more than a century and came to the National Gallery of Art in 2014.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 13.1 “Direct Objects Reviewed.” “The floods clap their hands”: find the subject, verb and direct object.

For families. Scripture is printed from the offline King James text.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Find the personification: “The old house groaned in the wind.”

1. Which word is a human action?

Answer: “Groaned”: houses do not feel pain, but the house seems to.

Example 2. Personify the sun.

1. Give it one human action.

Answer: Sample: The sun climbed over the ridge and leaned on the barn roof.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is personification?
2. **EASY** What do the trees do in Isaiah 55:12?
3. **EASY** What do the floods do in Psalm 98:8?
4. **EASY** What do the hills do in Psalm 98:8?
5. **MEDIUM** Why is personification in the Psalms not nature worship?
6. **MEDIUM** Write one line personifying the wind.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Making everything talk; use one strong action.
- Mixing personification with a simile in the same line.

Make it a game • If It Could Talk. Each player draws an object card (kettle, oak, river, fence). He gives it one human action in one sentence.

Scripture. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Psalm 19:1, KJV)

The heavens “declare” God’s glory: personification that teaches theology.

Practice: answers

1. Giving human actions or feelings to something not human.
2. Clap their hands.
3. Clap their hands.
4. They are joyful together.
5. It calls creation to praise its Maker; nature serves God.
6. Sample: The wind rattled the latch, asking to come in.

5.4 AN IMAGE POEM FROM A PAINTING

OBJECTIVES

- Write a poem from close looking at a painting.
- Use imagery, simile or metaphor, and personification in one poem.
- Revise a poem by reading it aloud.

Warm-up. Look at a painting for one full minute without talking. Then list everything you saw.

Video slot. Video coming. Thomas Moran and the Yellowstone paintings (a museum channel); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

ekphrasis

A poem that describes a work of art. Say it EK-fruh-sis.

close looking

Studying a picture slowly, part by part.

stanza

A group of lines in a poem, like a paragraph.

revision

Seeing again: improving a draft.

CORE IDEAS

Poems from pictures. Poets have long written about paintings. You look slowly, list what you see, then choose the strongest images and shape them into lines.

The sample. The sample poem was written for this course from Moran's painting. It uses a metaphor (the river is a thread; the cliffs are bread-crust), a simile (spray like breath), and personification (pines stand guard).

Read aloud to revise. Your ear will hear stumbles your eye misses. Read slowly, mark rough spots, and fix one at a time.

The model. *Sample image poem, written for this course*

A sample image poem, written for this course, on Moran's Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.

The Canyon

The river is a silver thread
pulled tight between two walls of flame;
the cliffs are bread-crust, gold and red,
and every crag could have a name.

A cloud of spray climbs from the falls
like breath upon a winter day;
the pines stand guard along the walls;
the little men look on and pray.

PICTURE STUDY



The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Thomas Moran, 1872 · Oil on canvas · Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington (lent by the U.S. Department of the Interior Museum)
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Thomas Moran traveled with a government survey to Yellowstone in 1871. His huge painting of the canyon helped persuade Americans that the place should be protected; Congress made Yellowstone the first national park in 1872 and bought the painting the same year.

Look closely

- Find the waterfall. Find the tiny people.
- What colors are the canyon walls?
- Where is the light brightest?

Talk about it

1. Choose three images from the painting for a poem.

2. Give one thing in the painting a human action.

WRITING PROJECT: A POEM FROM A PAINTING

Write an eight- to twelve-line poem from one painting in this unit.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- The four paintings in this unit

Steps

1. Choose one painting. Look for two full minutes.
2. List fifteen things you see.
3. Circle the five strongest images.
4. Write the poem using at least one simile or metaphor and one personification.
5. Read aloud, mark rough spots, and revise twice.
6. Copy it neatly with the painting's title and artist under it.

Check your work

- Every image comes from the painting.
- I used a simile or metaphor and personification.
- I revised by reading aloud.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your list of fifteen things.
2. Your first and final drafts side by side.

History note. Yellowstone National Park was established on March 1, 1872.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.3 “Titles.” Italicize the title of a painting: *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone*. Put a poem's title in quotation marks.

For families. The sample poem was written for this course. Moran's 1872 painting was bought by Congress, hung in the Capitol, was transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1950, and is lent to the Smithsonian American Art Museum (House History, Art & Archives; DOI Museum). Moran painted a second, later version (1893–1901), also at the Smithsonian; the picture study uses the 1872 painting.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Find the metaphor in the sample.

1. Look for “is” comparisons.

Answer: “The river is a silver thread.”

Example 2. Revise: “The canyon was very very big and pretty.”

1. Replace vague words with an image.

Answer: The canyon fell away below me, a thousand feet of gold and rust.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is ekphrasis?
2. **EASY** Who painted the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone?
3. **EASY** Find the simile in the sample poem.
4. **EASY** Find the personification.
5. **MEDIUM** Why read a poem aloud to revise it?
6. **MEDIUM** When did Yellowstone become the first national park?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Writing about how you feel about art in general instead of what is in the picture.
- Keeping every image; choose the best.

Make it a game · Gallery Guess. One player reads his poem aloud. The others guess which painting in the unit it describes.

Scripture. “O LORD , how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.” (Psalm 104:24, KJV)

A painter copies God’s works; a poet copies the painter. All of it points back to the Maker.

Practice: answers

1. A poem that describes a work of art.
2. Thomas Moran.
3. “like breath upon a winter day.”
4. “the pines stand guard.”
5. The ear catches stumbles and weak rhythm the eye misses.

6. 1872.

UNIT 5 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) Define imagery.
2. (1 pts) Simile or metaphor? “The LORD is my rock.”
3. (1 pts) Simile or metaphor? “He shall be like a tree.”
4. (3 pts) Define personification and give an example from Scripture.
5. (2 pts) What is the last line of “The Eagle”?
6. (2 pts) Write a fresh simile for rain.

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: AN IMAGE POEM

Your final poem from 5.4 with the painting’s name, and your best poem from 5.1–5.3.

- **Imagery:** Exact pictures from the painting or the world.
- **Figures:** Simile or metaphor and personification used well.
- **Sound:** Reads smoothly aloud.
- **Mechanics:** Capitals, titles and punctuation correct.

Answer key

1. Words that make pictures and sensations in the reader’s mind.
2. Metaphor.
3. Simile.
4. Giving human actions to non-human things; “Let the floods clap their hands.”
5. “And like a thunderbolt he falls.”
6. Answers vary.

ARGUMENT BASICS

The practical unit: the parts of an argument (claim, reason, evidence), fact versus opinion, two common fallacies, and a workshop for the VFW Patriot's Pen essay contest.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Knows refutation and confirmation (Units 2-3).

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can name and write a claim, a reason and evidence.
- ☐ I can tell fact, opinion and inference apart.
- ☐ I can spot ad hominem and hasty generalization.
- ☐ I can draft a contest essay that meets the rules.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **VFW Patriot's Pen** (<https://www.vfw.org>): Official rules and entry form.
- **Library of Congress Veterans History Project** (<https://www.loc.gov/programs/veterans-history-project/>): Veterans' own words.

6.1 CLAIM, REASON, EVIDENCE ★

OBJECTIVES

- Define claim, reason and evidence.
- Find them in Paul’s defense before King Agrippa (Acts 26).
- Write three short arguments with a claim, a reason and evidence.

Warm-up. Finish: “We should get a dog because ...” Now: how could you prove your reason is true?

Video slot. Video coming. Claim, reason, evidence for middle school (an argument-writing explainer); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

claim

The point you want the reader to accept.

reason

Why the claim is true; usually follows “because.”

evidence

Facts, examples, records or testimony that support the reason.

argument

A claim supported by reasons and evidence. (Not a quarrel.)

CORE IDEAS

Three parts. Refutation and confirmation are arguments about stories. Every argument has the same three parts: a *claim* (what I say is true), a *reason* (why), and *evidence* (how we know).

Paul before Agrippa. When Festus shouted that Paul was mad, Paul answered calmly. Claim: “I am not mad.” Reason: he speaks “the words of truth and soberness.” Evidence: the king himself knows these things, “for this thing was not done in a corner.” Public events can be checked.

Order. A short argument paragraph: claim first, then reason, then evidence, then a sentence that ties them together.

The model. *Acts 26:24–26 (KJV), Paul before Festus and Agrippa*

And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad,

most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

PICTURE STUDY



Webster Replying to Senator Hayne, George P. A. Healy, 1851 · Oil on canvas · Faneuil Hall, Boston
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

In January 1830, Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts answered Senator Robert Hayne of South Carolina in a famous debate about the Union. George Healy painted the scene twenty years later, with more than a hundred faces. Webster's speech ended with the words "Liberty and Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!"

Look closely

- Find Webster. How does Healy make him stand out?
- Look at the gallery. Who came to listen?
- Where does the light fall?

Talk about it

1. What makes a speaker worth listening to: his voice, or his reasons?
2. Write a claim and a reason Webster might have given.

WRITING PROJECT: THREE SHORT ARGUMENTS

Write three argument paragraphs on everyday claims.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose three claims (for example: “Every child should learn to swim”; “Our town needs a library branch”; “Handwriting still matters”).
2. For each, write the claim in one sentence.
3. Add one reason with “because.”
4. Add one piece of evidence (a fact, example or testimony).
5. Close with a sentence that ties them together.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- Each paragraph has a claim, a reason and evidence.
- My evidence can be checked.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Acts 26:26.
2. Label C, R and E on one of your arguments.

History note. The Webster-Hayne debate began over western lands and became an argument about whether a state could set aside a federal law.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.1 “Coordinating and Correlative Conjunctions.” “Not only ... but also” joins two reasons neatly.

For families. Webster’s Second Reply to Hayne was given January 26–27, 1830. Healy’s painting (finished 1851) hangs in the Great Hall of Faneuil Hall.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Label: “Children should learn to swim, because drowning is a leading danger for young children; the Red Cross teaches water safety for this reason.”

1. Find the point, the why, and the support.

Answer: Claim: children should learn to swim. Reason: drowning is a danger. Evidence: the Red Cross’s water-safety teaching (a source that can be checked).

Example 2. Add evidence: “Reading aloud helps children learn words, because they hear words they would not read alone.”

1. Give an example or a source.

Answer: Sample: For example, my little sister learned “enormous” from *Make Way for Ducklings* before she could read it.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a claim?
2. **EASY** What word often begins a reason?
3. **EASY** Name three kinds of evidence.
4. **EASY** What was Paul’s claim?
5. **MEDIUM** What was Paul’s evidence?
6. **MEDIUM** Is “Pizza is the best food” a good claim for an argument? Why?

COMMON MISTAKES

- A claim with no reason (“because I said so”).
- Evidence that cannot be checked (“everybody knows”).

Make it a game • Because Chain. One player states a claim. Each next player must add “because ...” or “for example ...” until the claim is well supported.

Scripture. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1 Peter 3:15, KJV)

Christians are to give a reason, with meekness and fear: claim, reason and evidence, kindly given.

Practice: answers

1. The point you want the reader to accept.
2. Because.
3. Facts, examples, records, testimony (any three).
4. “I am not mad.”
5. The king knew these things; they were not done in a corner.
6. Not a strong one: it is taste, hard to support with evidence.

6.2 FACT VERSUS OPINION

OBJECTIVES

- Tell a fact from an opinion.
- Find facts, opinions and inferences in Twain's reading of the river.
- Support an opinion with facts.

Warm-up. Sort these: "Water boils at 212°F at sea level." "Summer is the best season." "It will rain tomorrow; the sky is red this morning."

Video slot. Video coming. Fact and opinion for middle school; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

fact

A statement that can be checked and shown true or false.

opinion

A statement of what someone thinks, feels or prefers.

inference

A conclusion drawn from facts: "The log means the river is rising."

judgment

An opinion about what is good, right or wise, which can be well or poorly supported.

CORE IDEAS

Three kinds of statements. A fact can be checked ("there is a slanting mark on the water"). An opinion tells what someone thinks ("that sunset is beautiful"). An inference reasons from facts to a conclusion ("that mark means a bluff reef").

Twain the pilot. In the model, Mark Twain looks at a river he once only admired and now reads like a book. Each sentence moves from a fact (a floating log, tumbling boils, a silver streak) to an inference (the river is rising, the channel is changing, a new snag is there). A trained pilot's inferences save lives.

Opinions are not all equal. Some opinions are judgments that can be supported: "Honesty is better than lying." Support them with facts, reasons and Scripture. An opinion with good reasons is worth more than one without.

The model. *Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi (1883), chapter 9 (Project Gutenberg #245)*

But as I have said, a day came when I began to cease from noting the glories and the charms which the moon and the sun and the twilight wrought upon the river's face; another day came when I ceased altogether to note them. Then, if that sunset scene had been repeated, I should have looked upon it without rapture, and should have commented upon it, inwardly, after this fashion: This sun means that we are going to have wind to-morrow; that floating log means that the river is rising, small thanks to it; that slanting mark on the water refers to a bluff reef which is going to kill somebody's steamboat one of these nights, if it keeps on stretching out like that; those tumbling 'boils' show a dissolving bar and a changing channel there; the lines and circles in the slick water over yonder are a warning that that troublesome place is shoaling up dangerously; that silver streak in the shadow of the forest is the 'break' from a new snag, and he has located himself in the very best place he could have found to fish for steamboats; that tall dead tree, with a single living branch, is not going to last long, and then how is a body ever going to get through this blind place at night without the friendly old landmark.

PICTURE STUDY



A Philosopher Lecturing on the Orrery, Joseph Wright of Derby, about 1766 · Oil on canvas · Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Derby, England
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

An orrery is a machine that shows how the planets move around the sun. Joseph Wright painted a lecturer showing one to a family by lamplight. The lamp in the middle plays the sun, so the children's faces glow like full moons.

Look closely

- Find the lamp. What does it stand for?

- Look at each face. Who is curious? Who is thinking?
- What is the man on the right writing?

Talk about it

1. Name one fact the children could learn from the orrery.
2. Name one opinion someone in the picture might have.

WRITING PROJECT: FACT, OPINION, INFERENCE

Make a three-column chart from Twain, then write an opinion paragraph supported by facts.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Draw three columns: Fact, Inference, Opinion.
2. Sort at least six statements from the model.
3. Write one opinion of your own (for example: “Our town’s river is worth protecting”).
4. Support it with three facts and one inference.
5. Underline each fact.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- My chart has six statements sorted correctly.
- My opinion has at least three facts.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy one sentence from Twain that holds both a fact and an inference.
2. Write two facts and two opinions about your street.

History note. Wright of Derby’s *Orrery* (about 1766) is in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery in England.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 13.4 “Predicate Adjectives.” Opinions often hide in predicate adjectives: “The river is beautiful.”

For families. Twain’s text is Project Gutenberg #245. Twain trained as a cub pilot from 1857 under Horace Bixby and was licensed in 1859.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Sort: “that floating log means that the river is rising.”

1. The log is a fact; the rising river is a conclusion.

Answer: Inference from a fact.

Example 2. Sort: “All the grace, the beauty, the poetry had gone out of the majestic river!”

1. Can it be checked?

Answer: Opinion (a feeling about the river).

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a fact?
2. **EASY** What is an opinion?
3. **EASY** What is an inference?
4. **EASY** Fact or opinion: “Twain was a licensed steamboat pilot.”
5. **MEDIUM** What does the tall dead tree with one branch tell the pilot?
6. **MEDIUM** Turn the opinion “Our library is great” into a supported opinion.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Calling an opinion false just because you disagree.
- Treating an inference as if it were certain.

Make it a game • Fact or Opinion Toss. Toss a beanbag. The catcher must say one fact or one opinion about the room, and the others call which it is.

Scripture. “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.” (Proverbs 14:15, KJV)

The prudent man looks well before he believes, like a pilot reading the water.

Practice: answers

1. A statement that can be checked.
2. What someone thinks, feels or prefers.
3. A conclusion drawn from facts.
4. Fact.
5. It is a landmark that will not last long.

6. Sample: Our library is a great help to families: it is open six days a week, lends 40,000 books, and runs a summer reading program.

6.3 COMMON FALLACIES (FIRST LOOK)

OBJECTIVES

- Define a fallacy.
- Recognize two fallacies: ad hominem and hasty generalization.
- Find bad reasoning in Aesop's "The Wolf and the Lamb."

Warm-up. Your sister says, "You can't be right about the math; you can't even tie your shoes!" What is wrong with her answer?

Video slot. Video coming. Logical fallacies for kids: ad hominem and hasty generalization; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

fallacy

A mistake in reasoning that can make a weak argument look strong.

ad hominem

Latin for "to the man": attacking the person instead of his argument.

hasty generalization

A conclusion about all from too few cases: "I met two rude people from that town, so everyone there is rude."

pretext

A false reason given to hide the real one.

CORE IDEAS

Ad hominem. Answer the argument, not the man. "He's only twelve, so his idea about the garden is wrong" is a fallacy. His age does not make his idea wrong; test the idea.

Hasty generalization. One or two cases are not enough to judge all. "I got sick after eating fish once, so fish is bad" jumps too fast.

The Wolf's pretexts. The Wolf already decided to eat the Lamb. He makes up charges, and each is refuted. He eats the Lamb anyway. When someone keeps changing his reasons but never his conclusion, his reasons were never the real reason. Aesop's moral: "The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny."

The model. Aesop, *"The Wolf and the Lamb,"* translated by George Fyler Townsend (Project Gutenberg #21; the first word "A" is printed as a large initial in the source)

A Wolf, meeting with a Lamb astray from the fold, resolved not to lay violent hands on him, but to find some plea to justify to the Lamb the Wolf's right to eat him. He thus addressed him: "Sirrah, last year you grossly insulted me." "Indeed," bleated the Lamb in a mournful tone of voice, "I was not then born." Then said the Wolf, "You feed in my pasture." "No, good sir," replied the Lamb, "I have not yet tasted grass." Again said the Wolf, "You drink of my well." "No," exclaimed the Lamb, "I never yet drank water, for as yet my mother's milk is both food and drink to me." Upon which the Wolf seized him and ate him up, saying, "Well! I won't remain supperless, even though you refute every one of my imputations." The tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny.

PICTURE STUDY



Stump Speaking, George Caleb Bingham, 1853-1854 · Oil on canvas · Saint Louis Art Museum
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

George Caleb Bingham ran for office in Missouri himself, and he painted country elections. Here a candidate gives a speech from a stump. His rival sits behind him, waiting his turn. The listeners show every mood: eager, doubtful, bored and asleep.

Look closely

- Find the speaker and his rival.
- Find someone who believes him and someone who doubts.
- What is the boy in front doing?

Talk about it

1. What might the speaker say that would be an ad hominem attack on his rival?
2. Write a better answer, about the issue only.

WRITING PROJECT: FALLACY FINDER

Find and fix five fallacies.

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Read the five sample arguments your parent writes (or use the practice items).
2. Label each: ad hominem, hasty generalization, or none.
3. Rewrite each faulty one as a fair argument with a reason and evidence.
4. Write a short paragraph: what were the Wolf's pretexts, and how did the Lamb answer each?

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I labeled each fallacy correctly.
- Each rewrite answers the argument, not the person.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the definitions of ad hominem and hasty generalization.
2. Copy Aesop's moral.

History note. Bingham painted three election scenes in the 1850s: *Country Election*, *Stump Speaking* and *The Verdict of the People*.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 "Quotation Marks and Dialogue." The Wolf and the Lamb trade lines; find each new speaker.

For families. Political examples are kept historical (Bingham's 1850s Missouri). The lesson uses no current partisan issues, as the outline requires.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Name the fallacy: "Don't listen to Mr. Lee's idea for the bridge; he wears ugly ties."

1. It attacks the man, not the idea.

Answer: Ad hominem.

Example 2. Name and fix: “Two of my friends hate math, so all kids hate math.”

1. Two cases, conclusion about all.

Answer: Hasty generalization. Fix: “Two of my friends dislike math; I wonder how many students feel the same.”

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a fallacy?
2. **EASY** What does “ad hominem” mean?
3. **EASY** What is a hasty generalization?
4. **EASY** How many charges did the Wolf make?
5. **MEDIUM** Name the fallacy: “The new pastor is from the city, so he won’t understand farmers.”
6. **MEDIUM** What does Aesop’s moral mean?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Calling every disagreement a fallacy.
- Using a fallacy to answer a fallacy.

Make it a game • Wolf Court. One player is the Wolf and makes up charges; the Lamb must refute each calmly. Then switch.

Scripture. “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it , it is folly and shame unto him.” (Proverbs 18:13, KJV)

Answering before hearing the argument is folly and shame.

Practice: answers

1. A mistake in reasoning.
2. To the man: attacking the person, not the argument.
3. A conclusion about all from too few cases.
4. Three.
5. Hasty generalization (or a prejudice about the man).
6. A tyrant who has decided to do wrong will invent any excuse.

6.4 PATRIOT'S PEN ESSAY WORKSHOP

OBJECTIVES

- Read and follow the 2026–27 VFW Patriot's Pen rules.
- Plan a 300–400 word essay on “What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”
- Draft the essay with a claim, reasons and true examples.

Warm-up. Name a veteran you know or know of. What has he or she done since coming home?

Video slot. Video coming. Interviews with veterans from the Library of Congress Veterans History Project; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

veteran

A person who served in the armed forces.

VFW

Veterans of Foreign Wars, an organization of American veterans that runs the Patriot's Pen contest.

theme

The topic every entry must address.

word limit

The fewest and most words allowed.

CORE IDEAS

The contest. The VFW's Patriot's Pen essay contest is for students in grades 6–8. The 2026–27 theme is “What a Veteran Taught Me About America.” Essays must be 300–400 words, and entries are due to a local VFW Post by October 31, 2026. Get the official entry form from vfw.org or a local Post and follow every rule on it.

Use what you know. This essay is an argument and a memoir together. Claim: what the veteran taught you about America. Reasons and evidence: true things he or she said or did. Use the heads you know: an example told briefly, a comparison, an epilogue.

Interview first. If you can, talk to a veteran: a grandparent, a neighbor, a church member. Ask what he learned in service and what he wants young Americans to know. If you cannot, use a veteran's own words from the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

The model. *Sample opening and closing, written for this course*

*A sample opening and closing for a Patriot's Pen essay, written for this course.
(Your essay must be your own.)*

My grandfather never talked about the war unless someone asked him a question, and then he answered it and stopped. But every Saturday he raised the flag on the pole by the mailbox, and every Saturday he folded it again at sundown, the same way, thirteen folds, without a wrinkle. I thought it was only a habit. It took me a long time to learn that it was a lesson.

...

What a veteran taught me about America is that freedom is not a feeling; it is a duty kept every day, even when no one is watching. My grandfather kept it on a Saturday at sundown. I mean to keep it too.

PICTURE STUDY



The Veteran in a New Field, Winslow Homer, 1865 · Oil on canvas · The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Wikimedia Commons · CC0

Winslow Homer painted this in 1865, the year the Civil War ended. A soldier has come home and gone back to farming. His uniform jacket lies on the ground; he swings the scythe through golden wheat. Many saw in it Isaiah's words about swords beaten into plowshares.

Look closely

- Find the jacket and canteen. What do they tell you?
- Why can't we see the man's face?
- What season is it?

Talk about it

1. What could this veteran teach a young person about America?
2. Write one sentence for a Patriot's Pen essay inspired by this painting.

WRITING PROJECT: PATRIOT'S PEN DRAFT

Plan and draft your Patriot's Pen essay.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- The official entry form (from vfw.org or a local VFW Post)
- Interview notes

Steps

1. Read the official rules aloud with a parent and make a checklist.
2. Interview a veteran, or choose a veteran's recorded words.
3. Write your claim: what did the veteran teach you about America?
4. Plan three paragraphs of reasons and examples.
5. Draft 300–400 words. Count them.
6. Put it away for two days; revise in 8.1 or the Contest Lab.

Check your work

- My essay answers the theme exactly.
- It is 300–400 words.
- Every example is true.
- It is my own work.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy the theme exactly.
2. Write five interview questions.

History note. Homer painted *The Veteran in a New Field* in 1865, just after the war. The Met acquired it in 1967.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.4 “Capitalization in Depth.” Capitalize names of wars, branches of service and organizations (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

For families. Patriot's Pen 2026–27 facts (theme, 300–400 words, grades 6–8, due October 31, 2026) were checked for this course. Prizes, Post deadlines and other rules

vary; use the official form. Because this lesson falls in Unit 6, a family starting in late August may need to do it early; the deadline is October 31.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Turn a memory into a claim: “Grandpa raised the flag every Saturday.”

1. What did it teach?

Answer: Claim: My grandfather taught me that loving America is a daily duty, not a holiday feeling.

Example 2. Count: is 412 words allowed?

1. Limit is 300–400.

Answer: No; cut at least 12 words.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is the 2026–27 Patriot’s Pen theme?
2. **EASY** How long must the essay be?
3. **EASY** Which grades may enter?
4. **EASY** When are entries due to a local Post?
5. **MEDIUM** Why should every example be true?
6. **MEDIUM** Write one interview question.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Writing about the military in general instead of what a veteran taught you.
- Letting a parent write it. The rules require the student’s own work.

Make it a game · Thirty-Second Thank-You. Each family member gives a thirty-second thanks to a veteran by name, with one specific thing he or she did.

Scripture. “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” (Romans 13:7, KJV)

Give honor to whom honor is due. A good essay honors a veteran truthfully.

Practice: answers

1. “What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”
2. 300–400 words.

3. Grades 6-8.
4. October 31, 2026.
5. Honesty; and the essay is about a real veteran.
6. Sample: What is one thing you learned in the service that you still do every day?

UNIT 6 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (3 pts) Name the three parts of an argument.
2. (1 pts) Fact, opinion or inference: “That log means the river is rising.”
3. (2 pts) Define ad hominem.
4. (2 pts) Define hasty generalization.
5. (2 pts) State the Patriot’s Pen 2026–27 theme and length.
6. (3 pts) Write a claim, a reason and evidence for “Every family should have a fire plan.”

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: PATRIOT’S PEN DRAFT

Your 300–400 word draft and interview notes.

- **Theme:** Answers the theme exactly.
- **Argument:** A clear claim with true reasons and examples.
- **Rules:** 300–400 words; student’s own work.
- **Mechanics:** Capitalization and punctuation correct.

Answer key

1. Claim, reason, evidence.
2. Inference.
3. Attacking the person instead of the argument.
4. A conclusion about all from too few cases.
5. “What a Veteran Taught Me About America,” 300–400 words.
6. Answers vary; all three parts present.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE: THE MEMOIR SCENE

The creative track: the memoir scene. With Mark Twain as a cub pilot on the Mississippi, you will slow down one true moment, fill it with sensory detail, add a short reflection, and write a finished scene of your own.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Writes dialogue with correct quotation marks.

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can slow down one true moment.
- ☐ I can use details of several senses.
- ☐ I can write a short, specific reflection.
- ☐ I can keep one tense throughout.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **Twain, Life on the Mississippi (Project Gutenberg #245)**
(<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/245>): Chapters 6–13 are the piloting chapters.

7.1 ONE MOMENT, SLOWED DOWN

OBJECTIVES

- Define a memoir scene: one true moment, told slowly.
- See how Twain stretches a few seconds of panic into a page.
- Write one true moment of your own, slowed down.

Warm-up. Think of a moment that lasted only a few seconds but that you remember well: a fall, a catch, a fright. List everything that happened in those seconds.

Video slot. Video coming. Steamboats on the Mississippi and Mark Twain the pilot (a museum or park channel); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

memoir

A true account of something the writer lived through.

scene

One moment told in detail, in order, as if we were there.

pacing

How fast or slow a story moves.

leadsman

The crewman who measured the river's depth with a weighted line and called out the marks.

CORE IDEAS

A memoir is true. Unlike a story, a memoir tells what really happened to the writer. It is not about labels or feelings alone; it is about events, people and what God taught through them.

Slow it down. Twain's panic lasts perhaps a minute. He tells it in a page: each cry of the leadsman, each bell rope, each wrong turn of the wheel. Short sentences and exact actions make the moment feel long, the way it felt to him.

The trick. Twain's teacher, the pilot Horace Bixby, had arranged with the crew to call out false depths, to test whether young Sam Clemens trusted what he knew. He did not, and he panicked. The next lesson (7.3) gives Bixby's words afterward.

The model. *Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi (1883), chapter 13 (Project Gutenberg #245)*

All at once I imagined I saw shoal water ahead! The wave of coward agony that surged through me then came near dislocating every joint in me. All my confidence in that crossing vanished. I seized the bell-rope; dropped it, ashamed; seized it again; dropped it once more; clutched it tremblingly one again, and pulled it so feebly that I could hardly hear the stroke myself. Captain and mate sang out instantly, and both together--

'Starboard lead there! and quick about it!'

This was another shock. I began to climb the wheel like a squirrel; but I would hardly get the boat started to port before I would see new dangers on that side, and away I would spin to the other; only to find perils accumulating to starboard, and be crazy to get to port again. Then came the leadsman's sepulchral cry--

'D-e-e-p four!'

Deep four in a bottomless crossing! The terror of it took my breath away.

'M-a-r-k three!... M-a-r-k three... Quarter less three!... Half twain!'

This was frightful! I seized the bell-ropes and stopped the engines.

'Quarter twain! Quarter twain! *Mark* twain!'

I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and I could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far.

'Quarter *less* twain! Nine and a *half*!'

We were *drawing* nine! My hands were in a nerveless flutter. I could not ring a bell intelligibly with them. I flew to the speaking-tube and shouted to the engineer--

'Oh, Ben, if you love me, *back* her! Quick, Ben! Oh, back the immortal *soul* out of her!'

PICTURE STUDY



A Midnight Race on the Mississippi, Currier & Ives, 1875 · Hand-colored lithograph · The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Wikimedia Commons · CC0

Currier & Ives sold cheap, colorful prints of American life. This one shows two steamboats racing by moonlight, their stacks throwing sparks. Twain steered boats like these in the years just before the Civil War.

Look closely

- Find the pilothouse on each boat. Where is it?
- What comes out of the stacks?
- Where is the light coming from?

Talk about it

1. Imagine you are the cub pilot in one pilothouse. Slow down one second of the race in three sentences.
2. What sounds would you hear?

WRITING PROJECT: ONE TRUE MOMENT

Write a true moment of a few seconds, slowed down to a page (about 250 words).

You will need

- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Choose a moment that lasted less than a minute.
2. List every action, sound and thought in order.
3. Write it in the first person (I), in the past tense.
4. Use some short sentences where the action is fast.
5. Stop at the end of the moment; do not explain it yet.

Check your work

- It is true.
- It covers only a few seconds or minutes.
- Actions are in order and exact.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy two of the leadsman's calls.
2. List three true moments you could write about.

History note. Currier & Ives published more than one print with this title; the Metropolitan Museum dates this one 1875. Twain had steered boats like these before the Civil War closed the river in 1861.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 "Quotation Marks and Dialogue." Twain's edition uses single quotation marks; American schools use double. Use double marks in your own writing.

For families. Twain's text (Project Gutenberg #245) uses a few old slang words; the model stops before Twain calls himself a rude name. Twain began as a cub pilot in 1857 under Horace Bixby.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Speed up or slow down? "I tripped, fell and got up."

1. It hurries a moment.

Answer: Slow it: My toe caught the root. The path tipped up to meet me. I had time to see an ant on a leaf before my hands hit the dirt.

Example 2. Why does Twain write “I seized the bell-ropes and stopped the engines”?

1. Exact action, not a feeling.

Answer: It shows his panic by what he does.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a memoir?
2. **EASY** What is a scene?
3. **EASY** Who was Twain’s teacher?
4. **EASY** What did the leadsman do?
5. **MEDIUM** How does Twain slow the moment?
6. **MEDIUM** Why did Bixby arrange the trick?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Summarizing a whole day instead of one moment.
- Making up details. A memoir must be true.

Make it a game · Slow Motion. One player acts out a short action in slow motion (catching a ball). Another narrates every part.

Scripture. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12, KJV)

Numbering our days means noticing them. A memoir scene notices one moment well.

Practice: answers

1. A true account of what the writer lived through.
2. One moment told in detail, as if we were there.
3. Horace Bixby.
4. Measured the river’s depth and called out the marks.
5. He tells each call and action in order with short sentences.
6. To test whether his cub trusted what he knew.

7.2 SENSORY DETAIL

OBJECTIVES

- Use details of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.
- Find the sensory details in Twain’s sunset.
- Revise a memoir scene by adding exact sensory details.

Warm-up. Close your eyes for one minute. List everything you hear. Then everything you smell.

Video slot. Video coming. Using the five senses in descriptive writing; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

sensory detail

A detail that appeals to one of the five senses.

specific

Exact: “a cottonwood log,” not “a thing.”

color words

Exact colors: “opal,” “ruddy,” not just “pretty.”

rapture

Great joy or delight.

CORE IDEAS

Five senses. A reader cannot see your memory. You must give it to him through his senses: what it looked like, sounded like, smelled, felt and tasted.

Twain’s sunset. Twain gives us color (“turned to blood,” “brightened into gold”), shape (“graceful circles and radiating lines”), and movement (“dissolving lights drifted steadily”). Notice that he names exact things: a log, a slanting mark, boiling rings, a dead tree with one leafy bough.

Choose, don’t pile up. Three exact details are worth more than ten vague ones. Pick the details that matter to the moment.

The model. *Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi (1883), chapter 9 (Project Gutenberg #245)*

I still keep in mind a certain wonderful sunset which I witnessed when steamboating was new to me. A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary

log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long, slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water; in another the surface was broken by boiling, tumbling rings, that were as many-tinted as an opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame in the unobstructed splendor that was flowing from the sun. There were graceful curves, reflected images, woody heights, soft distances; and over the whole scene, far and near, the dissolving lights drifted steadily, enriching it, every passing moment, with new marvels of coloring.

I stood like one bewitched. I drank it in, in a speechless rapture. The world was new to me, and I had never seen anything like this at home.

PICTURE STUDY



The Jolly Flatboatmen, George Caleb Bingham, 1846 · Oil on canvas · National Gallery of Art, Washington
Wikimedia Commons · CC0

Bingham grew up on the Missouri River and painted the boatmen who carried goods downriver before steamboats took over. Here the crew rests: one dances, one fiddles, one drums on a pan. You can almost hear the music.

Look closely

- What sounds would you hear on this boat?
- Find the cargo. What might it be?
- What is the weather like?

Talk about it

1. List one detail for each of the five senses that fits this painting.
2. Write three sentences as one of the boatmen.

WRITING PROJECT: FIVE SENSES REVISION

Revise your 7.1 scene by adding sensory details.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Your 7.1 scene
- Colored pencils

Steps

1. Make five columns: see, hear, smell, touch, taste.
2. Remember your moment and fill each column with at least two exact details.
3. Choose the best three to five.
4. Add them where they fit in your scene.
5. Underline each sense in a different color.

Check your work

- I used at least three senses.
- Details are exact.
- My scene is still true.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Twain's sentence about the dead tree.
2. Your five-senses chart.

History note. Bingham's *Jolly Flatboatmen* (1846) was sold to the American Art-Union, which printed thousands of engravings of it. The National Gallery of Art acquired the painting in 2015.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 14.2 "Degrees of Comparison." Twain writes "the red hue brightened"; find comparisons in your own details.

For families. The sunset passage is from chapter 9, "The Face of the Water."

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Make it sensory: “The kitchen was nice.”

1. Use exact senses.

Answer: The kitchen smelled of yeast and coffee, and the radiator ticked under the window.

Example 2. Which sense: “a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver”?

1. Shone, silver.

Answer: Sight.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Name the five senses.
2. **EASY** What color does Twain say the river turned?
3. **EASY** What floated through the gold?
4. **EASY** What does “rapture” mean?
5. **MEDIUM** Which sense does Twain use most?
6. **MEDIUM** Add a sound to “We sat by the campfire.”

COMMON MISTAKES

- Using only sight.
- Vague words (nice, cool, stuff).

Make it a game • Mystery Bag. Put an object in a bag. Each player describes it by touch only, in exact words, until someone guesses.

Scripture. “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (Psalm 34:8, KJV)

Scripture uses the senses too: taste and see.

Practice: answers

1. Sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste.
2. Blood red, brightening into gold.
3. A solitary log.
4. Great joy.
5. Sight.

6. Sample: We sat by the campfire while the pine knots popped and hissed.

7.3 WHAT I LEARNED

OBJECTIVES

- Write a short reflection that follows a memoir scene.
- Read Bixby's lesson to young Twain after the trick.
- Say what a moment taught you without preaching.

Warm-up. Think of a time an adult corrected you and you were glad later. What did the adult say?

Video slot. Video coming. Mark Twain's life for students (a museum or library channel); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

reflection

The part of a memoir in which the writer tells what the moment meant.

lesson

What was learned.

confidence

Trust in what one knows.

humility

An honest view of oneself; not thinking too highly of oneself.

CORE IDEAS

Scene, then meaning. A memoir usually tells the moment first and then reflects on it. The scene shows; the reflection explains.

Bixby's lesson. After the trick, Bixby told his cub two things: do not let anyone shake your confidence in what you truly know, and in a dangerous place, do not turn coward. Twain says nothing more. He lets Bixby's words be the lesson.

Don't preach. A good reflection is short, honest and specific: "I learned to trust the marker line, not the wheel." Avoid long sermons and big words.

The model. *Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi (1883), chapter 13 (Project Gutenberg #245)*

'Well, no, you won't, maybe. In fact I hope you won't; for I want you to learn something by that experience. Didn't you *know* there was no bottom in that crossing?'

'Yes, sir, I did.'

'Very well, then. You shouldn't have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence in that knowledge. Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don't turn coward. That isn't going to help matters any.'

PICTURE STUDY



Fur Traders Descending the Missouri, George Caleb Bingham, 1845 · Oil on canvas · The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Wikimedia Commons · CC0

A French trader and his son float downriver with their furs at dawn. The water is like glass. The boy leans on the cargo and looks straight at us; the father steers and watches. A pet fox (or bear cub) sits chained in the bow.

Look closely

- Find the animal at the front. What might it be?
- Look at the boy and the man. Who is learning from whom?
- What time of day is it?

Talk about it

1. What might the father have taught the boy on this trip?
2. Write one sentence of reflection the boy might write years later.

WRITING PROJECT: A SHORT REFLECTION

Add a reflection of three to five sentences to your 7.1 scene.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Your revised scene from 7.2

Steps

1. Reread your scene.
2. Ask: what did this moment teach me? Who taught it?
3. Write three to five sentences, plain and specific.
4. If someone said something wise, quote him exactly.
5. Read the scene and reflection together aloud.

Check your work

- The reflection is short and specific.
- It follows naturally from the scene.
- Quotation marks are correct.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Copy Bixby's two lessons in your own words.
2. Write one thing an older person taught you.

History note. Bingham's *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845) is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.2 "Quotation Marks and Dialogue." Quote the person who taught you exactly.

For families. Twain uses single quotation marks, as his edition printed them. Teach double marks for the student's own writing.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Make it specific: "I learned a lot that day about life."

1. What exactly?

Answer: I learned that I could keep a row straight only by looking ahead.

Example 2. What are Bixby's two lessons?

1. Read the model.

Answer: Trust what you know; and do not turn coward in a dangerous place.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a reflection?
2. **EASY** What was Bixby's first lesson?
3. **EASY** What was his second?
4. **EASY** Should a reflection be long?
5. **MEDIUM** Why does Twain let Bixby's words stand alone?
6. **MEDIUM** Write a one-sentence reflection about learning to ride a bike.

COMMON MISTAKES

- A reflection longer than the scene.
- A lesson that does not come from the scene.

Make it a game · What Did It Teach?. Family members tell short true moments. Others guess the lesson in one sentence.

Scripture. "Give instruction to a wise man , and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man , and he will increase in learning." (Proverbs 9:9, KJV)

A wise man takes correction and grows wiser, as young Twain did.

Practice: answers

1. The part of a memoir that tells what the moment meant.
2. Do not let anyone shake your confidence in what you know.
3. In a dangerous place, do not turn coward.
4. No; short and specific.
5. They are the lesson; more would weaken it.
6. Sample: My father let go of the seat before I knew it, and I learned that I could do more than I thought.

7.4 A MEMOIR SCENE

OBJECTIVES

- Write a finished memoir scene of 400–600 words.
- Combine a slowed-down moment, sensory detail and a short reflection.
- Revise for one tense and clear dialogue.

Warm-up. Read your 7.1–7.3 drafts aloud. What is the best sentence in them?

Video slot. Video coming. Writing a personal narrative (memoir) for middle school; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

memoir scene

A true moment told slowly, with sensory detail and a short reflection.

first person

Told by “I.”

past tense

Told as having already happened.

final copy

The clean, corrected version.

CORE IDEAS

Put it together. Your finished scene has three parts: a short setup, the moment slowed down with sensory details, and a short reflection.

The sample. “The Last Row” sets the scene in two sentences, slows down four rows of planting, gives exact details (hot seat, diesel, the marker scratch), and ends with a reflection shown, not told: Grandpa’s four fingers.

A true story about God’s providence. The best memoirs are about work, people and God’s care, not about labels for oneself. Choose a moment you are thankful for.

The model. *Sample memoir scene, written for this course*

A sample memoir scene, written for this course.

The Last Row

The planter was older than my father, and it groaned every time Grandpa

dropped it into the ground. That May he let me drive. I was eleven. The tractor seat was hot through my jeans, and the whole field smelled of diesel and turned dirt.

“Keep your eye on the marker line,” he said, “not on the front wheel.” Then he climbed down and walked to the fence.

For three rows I watched the front wheel. For three rows the corn would have come up crooked as a creek. On the fourth I lifted my eyes to the faint scratch the marker had left, and the tractor followed my eyes as if it had been waiting for me to look up.

When I reached the end of the last row, Grandpa was still at the fence. He did not say “good job.” He just nodded once and held up four fingers: the fourth row was the first straight one. In July I could still pick it out from the road.

PICTURE STUDY



Breezing Up (A Fair Wind), Winslow Homer, 1873-1876 · Oil on canvas · National Gallery of Art, Washington
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Winslow Homer painted a man and three boys sailing a catboat off the New England coast. The boat leans hard; the boys brace their feet; spray flies. The painting holds one bright moment of a summer day.

Look closely

- Find the four people. What is each doing?
- Which way is the wind blowing? How can you tell?
- What is on the horizon?

Talk about it

1. Which boy might write a memoir about this day? What would his best sentence be?
2. List one detail for each sense.

WRITING PROJECT: THE FINISHED MEMOIR SCENE

Write and polish a memoir scene of 400–600 words.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Drafts from 7.1–7.3

Steps

1. Choose your best moment (it may be the one from 7.1).
2. Write a setup of two or three sentences.
3. Slow down the moment with actions and sensory details.
4. Add any dialogue with correct marks.
5. End with a short reflection.
6. Check that every verb stays in the past tense.
7. Make a clean final copy with a title.

Check your work

- It is true.
- It has setup, slowed moment and reflection.
- Verbs stay in one tense.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your final copy.
2. One sentence: why did you choose this moment?

History note. Homer painted *Breezing Up* between 1873 and 1876; it is in the National Gallery of Art.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.2 “Troublesome Verbs: lie and lay, sit and set, rise and raise.” Memoirs are full of these verbs in the past tense: lay, set, rose.

For families. The sample was written for this course. Personal narrative should be about events, people, work and God’s providence, as the course guardrails require, not self-labeling.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Fix the tense: “I climb onto the seat and Grandpa said, ‘Go.’”

1. Keep everything in the past.

Answer: I climbed onto the seat, and Grandpa said, “Go.”

Example 2. Where is the reflection in “The Last Row”?

1. Look at the end.

Answer: Grandpa’s nod and four fingers, and the line in July: it is shown, not preached.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Name the three parts of a memoir scene.
2. **EASY** What person is a memoir told in?
3. **EASY** What tense?
4. **EASY** How long is the finished scene?
5. **MEDIUM** Find two sensory details in the sample.
6. **MEDIUM** Why should a memoir be about work, people or God’s care?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Switching tenses.
- Ending with “And that was the best day ever.”

Make it a game · Memoir Reading Night. Each family member reads a true scene aloud after supper. Listeners name their favorite detail.

Scripture. “That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD ; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.” (Joshua 4:6-7, KJV)

Israel set up stones so their children would ask, “What mean ye by these stones?” A memoir is a stone of remembrance.

Practice: answers

1. Setup, slowed moment, reflection.
2. First person.

3. Usually past tense.
4. 400-600 words.
5. Hot seat through jeans; smell of diesel and turned dirt.
6. Those are true and lasting subjects; they teach and honor others.

UNIT 7 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) What is a memoir?
2. (3 pts) Name the three parts of a memoir scene.
3. (2 pts) What were Bixby's two lessons?
4. (2 pts) Name the five senses.
5. (2 pts) Fix: "I run to the dock and jumped in."

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: A MEMOIR SCENE

Your finished 400-600 word scene from 7.4.

- **Truth:** A real moment, honestly told.
- **Scene:** Slowed down with exact actions.
- **Senses:** At least three senses.
- **Reflection:** Short, specific, follows from the scene.

Answer key

1. A true account of something the writer lived through.
2. Setup, slowed moment, reflection.
3. Trust what you know; do not turn coward in a dangerous place.
4. Sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste.
5. I ran to the dock and jumped in.

REVIEW

The review unit: revise the refutation and the confirmation, hold a family debate, and assemble the Grade 6 portfolio with a timed writing and a recitation.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Units 1–7.

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can revise before I edit.
- ☐ I can debate without fallacies.
- ☐ I can claim no more than my evidence shows.
- ☐ I can present a finished portfolio.

8.1 REVISING THE REFUTATION

OBJECTIVES

- Revise your Unit 2 refutation with a checklist.
- Strengthen the weakest head with better evidence.
- Check fairness: did you tell the story fairly first?

Warm-up. Read your Unit 2 refutation aloud. Which paragraph is weakest? Why?

Video slot. Video coming. Revising an argument essay (a writing teacher’s explainer); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

revise

To “see again” and improve the ideas and order, not just the spelling.

edit

To correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

evidence

Facts, records and testimony that support a point.

disguise

Something that hides what a thing really is.

CORE IDEAS

Revise before you edit. First look at ideas: is the exposition fair? Does each head have a reason and evidence? Then fix sentences and spelling.

The ass in the lion’s skin. In Aesop’s fable, the ass looks fierce until he opens his mouth. A weak argument is the same: it looks strong in its title, but one paragraph gives it away. Find your “bray” and fix it.

A revision checklist. (1) Fair exposition. (2) Each head in its own paragraph with evidence. (3) First source named. (4) A conclusion that says what is true. (5) Introductory commas, semicolons and colons correct.

The model. Aesop, *“The Ass in the Lion’s Skin,”* translated by George Fyler Townsend (Project Gutenberg #21)

An ass, having put on the Lion’s skin, roamed about in the forest and amused himself by frightening all the foolish animals he met in his wanderings. At last coming upon a Fox, he tried to frighten him also, but the Fox no sooner heard the

sound of his voice than he exclaimed, “I might possibly have been frightened myself, if I had not heard your bray.”

PICTURE STUDY



Two Old Men Disputing (Saint Peter and Saint Paul?), Rembrandt van Rijn, 1628 · Oil on panel · National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

The young Rembrandt painted two old men arguing over a book. Many think they are the apostles Peter and Paul, who once disagreed (Galatians 2:11). The light falls on the open page: the argument is settled by the text, not by the louder voice.

Look closely

- Where does the light fall?
- Which man is speaking? Which is listening?
- What is around them in the room?

Talk about it

1. How does the painting show a good argument?
2. Write the sentence the man pointing might be saying.

WRITING PROJECT: REVISE AND RECOPY

Revise your Unit 2 refutation and make a clean copy.

You will need

- Writing notebook

- Your refutation from 2.4
- Colored pencil

Steps

1. Read it aloud and mark the weakest paragraph.
2. Add one stronger piece of evidence there.
3. Check the five-point checklist above.
4. Edit for commas, semicolons and colons.
5. Make a clean copy.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- I improved at least one head with better evidence.
- My exposition is fair.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. List three changes you made and why.

History note. Rembrandt painted *Two Old Men Disputing* in Leiden in 1628; it is in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.4 “Semicolons and Colons.”

For families. Townsend’s Aesop is Project Gutenberg #21.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Strengthen: “The cherry tree story is fake because it sounds made up.”

1. Give a reason and a source.

Answer: The story is doubtful because its only source is Weems’s fifth edition of 1806, seven years after Washington’s death, from one unnamed witness.

Example 2. Edit: “First the story is unclear second it is late.”

1. Introductory commas; join or split.

Answer: First, the story is unclear. Second, it is late.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is the difference between revising and editing?
2. **EASY** What gave the ass away?
3. **EASY** Name two items on the checklist.
4. **EASY** Which comes first, revising or editing?
5. **MEDIUM** Why read aloud when revising?
6. **MEDIUM** What does the fable teach about arguments?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Only fixing spelling and calling it revision.
- Adding new heads without evidence.

Make it a game • Find the Bray. The parent reads a short argument with one weak sentence. Players “bray” when they hear it.

Scripture. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17, KJV)

Iron sharpeneth iron: let a parent or sibling sharpen your argument.

Practice: answers

1. Revising improves ideas and order; editing fixes mechanics.
2. His bray.
3. Any two of the five.
4. Revising.
5. You hear weak spots and missing words.
6. An argument can look strong until its weak part is heard.

8.2 DEBATE DAY ★

OBJECTIVES

- Hold a short family debate on a story or historical claim.
- Give a refutation and a confirmation aloud.
- Answer the other side without fallacies.

Warm-up. Name a story you think is true and one you think is a legend. Be ready to defend one side.

Video slot. Video coming. How a simple debate works (opening, rebuttal, closing) for students; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

debate

A formal contest of arguments, with turns and rules.

resolution

The statement being debated: “Resolved: The cherry tree story is a legend.”

affirmative

The side that argues for the resolution.

rebuttal

An answer to the other side’s arguments.

CORE IDEAS

Two sides, one claim. In a debate, the affirmative confirms the resolution and the negative refutes it. You have already learned both!

A simple format. Affirmative speech (2 minutes); negative speech (2 minutes); a 1-minute rebuttal each; a family vote on who argued better (not who is right).

Hear first. Scripture says he who answers before hearing shows folly (Proverbs 18:13), and that the first speaker seems right until his neighbor examines him (Proverbs 18:17). Take notes while the other side speaks.

The model. *Proverbs 18:13 and 18:17 (KJV)*

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it , it is folly and shame unto him.

...

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

PICTURE STUDY



Canvassing for a Vote, George Caleb Bingham, 1852 · Oil on canvas · Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City

Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Bingham, who ran for office himself, painted a candidate trying to win a voter. The townsmen listen with different faces: one leans in, one looks doubtful, one seems to have heard it all before.

Look closely

- Which man is the candidate? How can you tell?
- Which listener is convinced? Which is not?
- What is the dog doing?

Talk about it

1. How would you persuade the doubtful man with reasons, not flattery?
2. Write one question the doubtful man might ask.

WRITING PROJECT: FAMILY DEBATE

Prepare and give a two-minute debate speech.

You will need

- Writing notebook

- A timer
- Your Units 2–3 essays

Steps

1. Choose a resolution (for example: “Resolved: Columbus proved the earth was round” or “Resolved: Winslow’s letter is good evidence for the 1621 harvest”).
2. Draw sides.
3. Write a two-minute speech: claim, two reasons, evidence, epilogue.
4. Take notes during the other speech.
5. Give a one-minute rebuttal.
6. Shake hands and thank your opponent.

Check your work

- I spoke clearly for about two minutes.
- I answered arguments, not the person.
- I used evidence.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your speech notes.
2. One thing the other side said well.

History note. Bingham’s *Canvassing for a Vote* (1852) is in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.3 “Words Often Confused.” In speech notes, check *affect/effect* and *than/then*.

For families. Keep debate topics historical or about stories, not current partisan issues, as the outline requires. A short, friendly format works best.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Turn into a resolution: “I think the cherry tree story is a legend.”

1. Start with “Resolved:”.

Answer: Resolved: The cherry tree story is a legend.

Example 2. A fair rebuttal to “He’s younger, so he’s wrong.”

1. Answer the fallacy calmly.

Answer: “My age is not an argument. Let’s look at the evidence: the only source is Weems, in 1806.”

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is a resolution?
2. **EASY** Which side argues for the resolution?
3. **EASY** What is a rebuttal?
4. **EASY** What does Proverbs 18:17 warn?
5. **MEDIUM** Why vote on who argued better, not who is right?
6. **MEDIUM** Name a fallacy to avoid in debate.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Interrupting.
- Attacking the person instead of the argument.

Make it a game · Switch Sides. After the debate, each speaker gives a thirty-second speech for the other side.

Scripture. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” (Colossians 4:6, KJV)

Speech seasoned with salt: firm, gracious and fitting.

Practice: answers

1. The statement being debated.
2. The affirmative.
3. An answer to the other side’s arguments.
4. The first speaker seems right until he is examined.
5. It rewards reasoning and fairness.
6. Ad hominem or hasty generalization.

8.3 REVISING THE CONFIRMATION

OBJECTIVES

- Revise your Unit 3 confirmation.
- Separate what the source says from later additions.
- Strengthen the “witnessed” head.

Warm-up. Read your Unit 3 confirmation. Did you claim anything your source does not say?

Video slot. Video coming. Using primary sources (a library or archives explainer for students); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

testimony

What a witness says.

addition

A detail added later that is not in the source.

cite

To name exactly where a quotation or fact comes from.

verify

To check that something is true.

CORE IDEAS

Say only what the source says. The strongest confirmation claims no more than its evidence. If Winslow does not mention turkey, do not say he did.

John’s ending. The Gospel of John closes by naming its witness: “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.” That is the “witnessed” head in one sentence.

Cite. Every quotation and every number should have its source in the sentence or at the end.

The model. *John 21:24–25 (KJV)*

This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

PICTURE STUDY



The Apostle Paul at His Writing Desk, Rembrandt van Rijn, about 1629–1630 · Oil on panel · Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

The young Rembrandt painted Paul pausing in his writing, lost in thought. Light falls on his face and his papers. Behind him hangs a sword, the old sign of Paul's martyrdom and of "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Look closely

- Find the sword. Why might it be there?
- What is Paul doing with his pen?
- Where does the light fall?

Talk about it

1. Paul often named his witnesses (1 Corinthians 15). How does a careful writer think before he writes?
2. Write one sentence Paul might be about to write.

WRITING PROJECT: REVISE AND RECOPY

Revise your Unit 3 confirmation and make a clean copy.

You will need

- Writing notebook
- Your confirmation from 3.4
- The model passage from 3.4

Steps

1. Highlight every fact you state.
2. Check each against the source. Remove or correct anything the source does not say.
3. Strengthen the “witnessed” head: when, who, how close to the event.
4. Check every quotation word for word.
5. Make a clean copy with a source list.

Check your work

- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
- Every sentence is complete: it has a subject and a predicate.
- Every fact is in my source.
- Every quotation is exact and cited.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. List any additions you removed.

History note. The quotation in the picture study, “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” is Ephesians 6:17.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.3 “Titles.” Cite books in italics and letters or articles in quotation marks.

For families. Rembrandt’s painting (about 1629–1630) is in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg. Scripture is printed from the offline King James text.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Remove the addition: “Winslow says they ate turkey and pumpkin pie.”

1. What does Winslow actually say?

Answer: Winslow says the men killed “fowl” and the guests brought five deer.

Example 2. Cite: “The feast lasted three days.”

1. Add the source.

Answer: The feast lasted three days, according to Edward Winslow’s letter of December 11, 1621.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is an addition?
2. **EASY** What does it mean to cite?
3. **EASY** Whom does John 21:24 name as witness?
4. **EASY** Should you claim more than your evidence shows?
5. **MEDIUM** Why does claiming too much weaken a confirmation?
6. **MEDIUM** Rewrite with a citation: “Lincoln spoke for two minutes.”

COMMON MISTAKES

- Adding details from movies or pictures.
- Quoting from memory.

Make it a game • Source Says. Like “Simon Says”: the parent reads statements; players stand only if “the source says” it.

Scripture. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11, KJV)

The Bereans checked even Paul against the Scriptures. Check your own work the same way.

Practice: answers

1. A detail added later that is not in the source.
2. To name exactly where a fact or quotation comes from.
3. The disciple who wrote the Gospel.
4. No.
5. A reader who finds one false claim will doubt the rest.
6. Sample: Lincoln spoke for about two minutes, according to the Library of Congress.

8.4 PORTFOLIO AND YEAR IN REVIEW

OBJECTIVES

- Assemble the Grade 6 portfolio.
- Write a short timed piece to show growth.
- Recite a maxim and give a one-minute refutation or confirmation aloud.

Warm-up. Look through your notebook from the first week. What can you do now that you could not do then?

Video slot. Video coming. No video this week; read your best pieces aloud instead.

KEY TERMS

portfolio

A folder of a student's best finished work.

timed writing

Writing on a topic in a set time, without help.

recitation

Saying a passage from memory.

growth

How much better you write now than before.

CORE IDEAS

Your portfolio. A maxim (Unit 1), a refutation (Units 2 and 8), a confirmation (Units 3 and 8), a short story (Unit 4), an image poem (Unit 5), a Patriot's Pen essay (Unit 6) and a memoir scene (Unit 7).

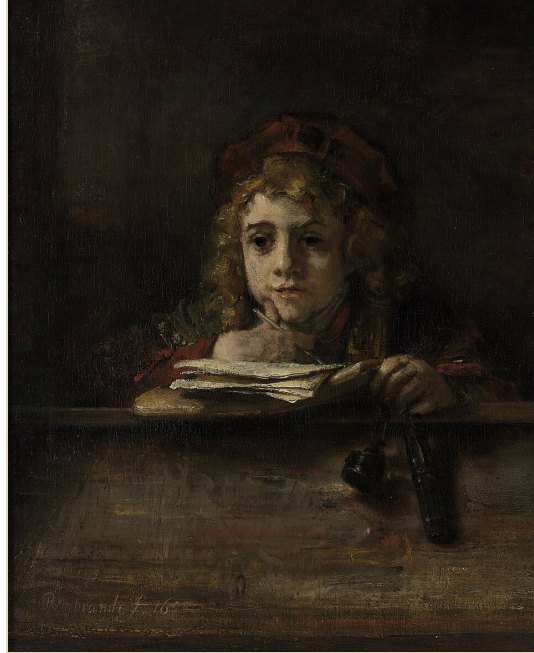
Timed writing. In 30 minutes, write a short refutation or confirmation of a story your parent chooses. Compare it with your first-week writing.

The Preacher's method. Solomon "sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." That is the whole year: words that are fitting and true.

The model. *Ecclesiastes 12:9–10 (KJV)*

And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

PICTURE STUDY



Titus at His Desk, Rembrandt van Rijn, 1655 · Oil on canvas · Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Rembrandt painted his son Titus, about fourteen, at his school desk. Titus holds a pen but has stopped writing. He looks off, thinking, with his thumb at his chin.

Look closely

- What is Titus holding?
- Look at his face. What might he be thinking about?
- What is on the desk?

Talk about it

1. How is Titus like you at the end of this year?
2. Write the first sentence Titus might write next.

WRITING PROJECT: THE GRADE 6 PORTFOLIO

Gather, label and present your best work.

You will need

- Folder
- Final copies from Units 1–7
- A timer

Steps

1. Put the pieces in order with a title page.
2. Write a one-paragraph introduction: what you learned this year.
3. Do the timed writing (30 minutes).
4. Recite Proverbs 16:18 or another maxim from memory.
5. Give a one-minute refutation or confirmation aloud to the family.

Check your work

- Every piece is a clean final copy.
- The introduction names at least three skills learned.
- I recited from memory.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your introduction paragraph.
2. Three goals for Grade 7.

History note. Rembrandt painted his son Titus several times; *Titus at His Desk* (1655) is in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.4 “Capitalization in Depth.” Check every title on your portfolio pages.

For families. Celebrate the year. A short family reading night is a good way to finish. Grade 7 continues with the commonplace, encomium and invective.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Write a one-sentence summary of the year.

1. Name the exercises.

Answer: This year I learned to expand a maxim, to refute and confirm stories, to build a plot, to write in images and to tell a true moment well.

Example 2. Name a growth you see.

1. Compare first and last pieces.

Answer: Sample: In September I wrote one long paragraph; now I write five clear ones, each with evidence.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** Name the three classical exercises of Grade 6.
2. **EASY** Name the five parts of plot.
3. **EASY** Name the heads of refutation.
4. **EASY** What is this year's verse?
5. **MEDIUM** What is a primary source? Give an example from this year.
6. **MEDIUM** What did Solomon seek, according to Ecclesiastes 12:10?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Putting drafts in the portfolio instead of final copies.
- Rushing the timed writing without a plan.

Make it a game • Year in Review Quiz. Each family member writes three questions from the year's lessons. Take turns answering.

Scripture. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV)

The year's verse: test every claim and hold fast what is good.

Practice: answers

1. Maxim, refutation, confirmation.
2. Exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.
3. Unclear, impossible, unfitting, illogical.
4. 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
5. A record made at the time: Winslow's letter, the Gallio inscription, Lincoln's manuscripts.
6. Acceptable words, upright words of truth.

UNIT 8 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (2 pts) What is the difference between revising and editing?
2. (2 pts) What is a resolution in a debate?
3. (2 pts) What is an addition in a confirmation?
4. (2 pts) Recite this year's verse.
5. (10 pts) In 30 minutes, write a short refutation or confirmation of a story your parent chooses.

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: THE GRADE 6 PORTFOLIO

The full portfolio: maxim, refutation, confirmation, story, poem, Patriot's Pen essay, memoir scene, introduction and timed writing.

- **Completeness:** All pieces present, in order, as final copies.
- **Growth:** Clear improvement from first to last.
- **Accuracy:** Sources and quotations exact.
- **Presentation:** Recitation and speech clear.

Answer key

1. Revising improves ideas; editing fixes mechanics.
2. The statement being debated.
3. A detail not in the source.
4. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
5. Scored with the Unit 2 or 3 checklist.

BONUS: CONTEST LAB

An optional unit for students who want to enter a real contest: finish a VFW Patriot's Pen essay (grades 6–8, 300–400 words, due October 31, 2026) and a DAR American History Essay (grades 6–8, 600–1,000 words), then polish and send an entry.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Draft from 6.4; plot mountain from Unit 4; confirmation from Unit 3.

MASTERY CHECKLIST

- ☐ I can turn rules into a checklist.
- ☐ I can keep to a word limit.
- ☐ I can list my sources.
- ☐ I can prepare a clean, honest final entry.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

- **VFW** (<https://www.vfw.org>): Patriot's Pen form and Post locator.
- **DAR essay contests** (<https://www.dar.org/outreach/education/essay-contests>): Official page and chapter locator.

9.1 THE PATRIOT’S PEN ENTRY

OBJECTIVES

- Turn the Patriot’s Pen rules into a checklist.
- Revise the 6.4 draft to 300–400 words that answer the theme exactly.
- Prepare a clean entry for a local VFW Post.

Warm-up. Read your 6.4 draft aloud. Underline the sentence that best answers “What a veteran taught me about America.”

Video slot. Video coming. Library of Congress Veterans History Project: a short veteran interview; preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

entry form

The official paper that goes with a contest entry.

Post

A local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

theme

The exact topic the essay must answer.

word count

The number of words, counted by a set rule.

CORE IDEAS

Rules first. Read the official form before you revise. Write each rule as a checkbox. A good essay that breaks a rule may not be judged at all.

Answer the theme. Judges ask: did the student tell what a veteran taught him about America? Every paragraph should help answer that question.

Revise with the heads. Use what you learned this year: a clear claim (6.1), true examples told briefly (Grade 5), a comparison, and an epilogue that urges.

The model. *Patriot’s Pen 2026–2027 summary*

A summary of the VFW Patriot’s Pen essay contest for 2026–2027, as checked for this course. Get the official entry form from vfw.org or your local VFW Post; it governs every rule not listed here.

Who: students in grades 6–8.

Theme (2026-2027): “What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”

Length: 300–400 words.

Deadline: entries are due to a local VFW Post by October 31, 2026.

Own work: the essay must be the student’s own. Read the official form for format, signatures and how the Post wants the entry delivered.

PICTURE STUDY



The Spirit of '76, Archibald MacNeal Willard, about 1875–1876 · Oil on canvas · Abbot Hall, Marblehead, Massachusetts
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Archibald Willard, who had served in the Civil War, painted three generations marching together for the centennial of 1876. The old drummer in the center is said to have been modeled on the painter’s own father. Willard painted several versions; the best known hangs in Abbot Hall in Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Look closely

- Count the generations. How old is each marcher?
- Find the wounded man. Is he stopping?
- What lies on the ground behind them?

Talk about it

1. What might the old drummer teach the boy about America?
2. Write the sentence your essay and this painting share.

WRITING PROJECT: THE FINAL PATRIOT’S PEN ESSAY

Revise and prepare the Patriot’s Pen entry.

You will need

- Your 6.4 draft
- The official entry form
- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Make a rule checklist from the official form.
2. Revise for the theme: cut anything that does not answer it.
3. Count words; stay within 300–400.
4. Check facts and names with the veteran or family.
5. Make the final copy exactly as the form asks.
6. Deliver it to the local Post by October 31, 2026.

Check your work

- Every rule is checked off.
- 300–400 words.
- It is my own work.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your rule checklist.
2. Final word count.

History note. Willard's *Spirit of '76* was first shown at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.4 "Capitalization in Depth."

For families. Patriot's Pen 2026–27 facts were checked for this course: theme, 300–400 words, grades 6–8, due to a local Post by October 31, 2026. The course does not list prizes or Post-level rules; use the official form.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Cut to fit: an essay is 423 words.

1. Look for repeated ideas and weak words (very, really, just).

Answer: Remove a repeated example and twelve weak words to reach 400 or fewer.

Example 2. Does this sentence answer the theme? “The Navy has many ships.”

1. Does it say what a veteran taught you?

Answer: No. Replace it with something the veteran said or did.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What is the theme?
2. **EASY** What is the word limit?
3. **EASY** Where do you get the official form?
4. **EASY** When is it due?
5. **MEDIUM** Why read every rule aloud?
6. **MEDIUM** Name one weak word to cut.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Writing about veterans in general.
- Missing the Post’s own deadline or form requirements.

Make it a game • Rule Detective. The parent makes three sample “entries,” each breaking one rule. Find the broken rule.

Scripture. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;” (Colossians 3:23, KJV)

Do it heartily, as to the Lord.

Practice: answers

1. “What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”
2. 300–400 words.
3. From vfw.org or a local VFW Post.
4. October 31, 2026 (to the local Post).
5. So no rule is missed; a broken rule can disqualify an entry.
6. Very, really or just.

9.2 THE DAR ESSAY (GRADES 6–8)

OBJECTIVES

- Plan a 600–1,000 word DAR American History essay on the 2026–27 topic.
- Use a confirmation's care with sources.
- Write a bibliography.

Warm-up. Imagine a rider gallops into your town square in July 1776 with a printed paper. What do you do first?

Video slot. Video coming. The Declaration of Independence read aloud (National Archives or a historic site); preview first. Search approved channels (e.g., Homeschool Pop (Alternate), a library or museum read-aloud); preview first.

KEY TERMS

broadside

A large printed sheet posted or read in public; the Declaration was first spread as a broadside.

bibliography

A list of all sources used.

historical accuracy

Everything fits what really happened in 1776.

title page

The cover page the rules require.

CORE IDEAS

The topic. The 2026–27 DAR topic asks you to imagine hearing the Declaration read aloud in your community in 1776. Grades 6–8 write 600–1,000 words.

Imagination with accuracy. This is a story, but the history must be right: dress, travel, news, prices and the war. Use what you learned in confirmation: check every detail against a good source and list it.

A plan. Use the plot mountain (Unit 4): exposition (your town, your family, July 1776), rising action (the rider, the reading), climax (your choice), falling action and resolution (how it changed your life).

The model. *DAR American History Essay Contest 2026–2027 summary*

A summary of the NSDAR 2026–2027 American History Essay Contest sheet (as posted by state and chapter societies). Get the official sheet and deadline from

your local chapter.

Who: grades 5–8 in public, private or parochial schools, or homeschooled.

Topic: Imagine hearing the Declaration of Independence read aloud in your community in 1776 (it was first read publicly in Philadelphia on July 8). How would you react? With whom would you share the news? What would you do? How would it change your life?

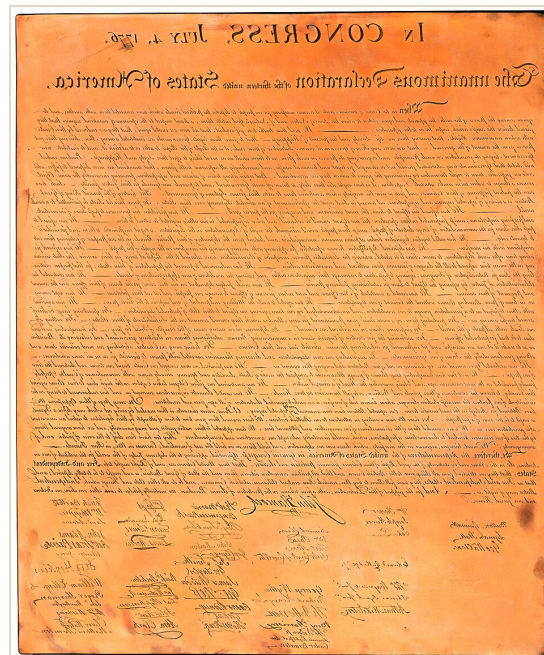
Length: grade 5, 300–600 words; **grades 6–8, 600–1,000 words.**

Form: typed, a completed title page, and a bibliography of all sources.

Own work: all research, writing and editing must be the student's own, not a parent's, teacher's, tutor's or AI's.

Judged on: historical accuracy, adherence to topic, organization, interest, originality, spelling, grammar, punctuation and neatness.

PICTURE STUDY



The Declaration of Independence (William J. Stone engraving), William J. Stone, 1823 · Copperplate engraving · Facsimile printed by order of Congress (scan via the Digital Public Library of America)
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

By the 1820s the original parchment Declaration was fading. Congress had William J. Stone make an exact engraving in 1823, and copies were printed from it. Most pictures of the Declaration you see today come from Stone's engraving.

Look closely

- Read the first words at the top.
- Find the largest signature. Whose is it?
- How is the writing different from print today?

Talk about it

1. How would hearing these words read aloud feel different from reading them?
2. Write the first sentence of your DAR essay.

WRITING PROJECT: DAR ESSAY PLAN AND DRAFT

Plan and draft your 600–1,000 word DAR essay.

You will need

- The official DAR sheet from your local chapter
- Library or museum sources (with a parent)
- Writing notebook

Steps

1. Read the official sheet aloud and make a rule checklist.
2. Research: list five true facts about life in 1776 in a town like yours.
3. Map your story on the plot mountain.
4. Draft 600–1,000 words.
5. Write a bibliography of every source.
6. Revise in the next lesson.

Check your work

- The essay answers the topic.
- Every historical detail is checked.
- A bibliography lists every source.
- Every sentence starts with a capital letter.
- Every sentence ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your five facts with sources.
2. Your plot mountain.

History note. William J. Stone finished his engraving of the Declaration in 1823; the original parchment is in the National Archives.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 15.3 “Titles.”

For families. DAR 2026–27 topic and length (grades 6–8, 600–1,000 words) are from the NSDAR contest sheet as posted by the West Virginia DAR and Cedar Brook Chapter (checked for Grade 5). Deadlines vary by chapter. The DAR rules forbid AI and adult help with writing.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Historically accurate? “I texted my cousin the news.”

1. Did it exist in 1776?

Answer: No. In 1776, news spread by riders, letters, broadsides and newspapers.

Example 2. A bibliography entry for a website.

1. Author or organization, title, site, date.

Answer: National Archives. “Declaration of Independence: A Transcription.” Online.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** How long is the DAR essay for grades 6–8?
2. **EASY** What is the 2026–27 topic?
3. **EASY** When was the first public reading in Philadelphia?
4. **EASY** What is a bibliography?
5. **MEDIUM** What is a broadside?
6. **MEDIUM** Why does historical accuracy count in an imagined story?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Modern details in a 1776 story.
- Forgetting the title page or bibliography.

Make it a game · 1776 or Not?. The parent names items (musket, zipper, quill, bicycle, tricorn hat). Players say whether they belong in 1776.

Scripture. “And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.” (Leviticus 25:10, KJV)

These words are on the Liberty Bell, which tradition (not certain record) says rang for the reading in Philadelphia.

Practice: answers

1. 600–1,000 words.
2. Imagine hearing the Declaration read aloud in your community in 1776.
3. July 8, 1776.

4. A list of all sources used.
5. A large printed sheet posted or read in public.
6. The contest judges it, and a false detail breaks the reader's trust.

9.3 FINAL POLISH AND ENTRY

OBJECTIVES

- Revise and edit a contest entry with a final checklist.
- Read the entry aloud for a last check.
- Prepare the entry exactly as the rules require.

Warm-up. What is one mistake you often make in writing? Write it on a sticky note and keep it in view today.

Video slot. Video coming. No video this week; read your entry aloud to the family instead.

KEY TERMS

proofread

To read slowly for small errors.

final copy

The clean version that is sent.

deadline

The last day an entry is accepted.

integrity

Honesty in every part: the facts, the sources and whose work it is.

CORE IDEAS

Last checks. Use the checklist in the model. Read the rules again; count words again; read aloud once more, slowly.

Own work. Both contests require the student's own work. A parent may ask questions and point to a problem; the student fixes it.

Win or not. Placing is a bonus. The real prize is a piece of writing that is true, clear and well made.

The model. *Final-entry checklist, written for this course*

A final-entry checklist, written for this course.

- ☐ I have the official rule sheet, and I read every line aloud with a parent.
- ☐ My essay answers the theme or topic exactly, in the words of the rules.
- ☐ My word count is inside the limit (I counted twice).
- ☐ Every fact is true and every quotation is exact; I can name the source of each.

- ☐ It is my own work. A parent may ask questions, but did not write or rewrite sentences.
- ☐ I read it aloud one last time, slowly.
- ☐ Title page, form and signatures are complete; the entry is delivered before the deadline.

PICTURE STUDY



The Boyhood of Lincoln (An Evening in the Log Hut), Eastman Johnson, 1868 · Oil on canvas · University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor
Wikimedia Commons · Public domain

Eastman Johnson painted young Abraham Lincoln reading by the fire in a log cabin, three years after Lincoln's death. Lincoln had almost no schooling; he taught himself by reading and copying what he read.

Look closely

- Where does the light come from?
- What is the boy doing?
- What tells you this is a poor home?

Talk about it

1. How did Lincoln's reading help him write the Gettysburg Address?
2. Write one sentence about why you write carefully.

WRITING PROJECT: SEND IT

Finish one contest entry and prepare it to send.

You will need

- Your entry
- The official rules
- The checklist

Steps

1. Check every box on the checklist.
2. Read the essay aloud to the family.
3. Make the final copy as the rules say.
4. Fill in the form and title page.
5. Deliver it before the deadline and keep a copy.

Check your work

- Every box is checked.
- The entry is the student's own work.
- A copy is kept for the portfolio.

WRITING NOTEBOOK

1. Your completed checklist.

History note. Eastman Johnson painted *The Boyhood of Lincoln* in 1868; it is in the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

 **Grammar link.** Grammar Level 2, Lesson 16.3 “Words Often Confused.” Check *their/there/they’re* and *its/it’s* one last time.

For families. The checklist was written for this course. Contest placement is a bonus, not a grade.

WORKED EXAMPLES

Example 1. Proofread: “Their were three drummers in the parade.”

1. There, their, they’re.

Answer: There were three drummers in the parade.

Example 2. Is this allowed? A parent rewrites the conclusion.

1. Read the rules on own work.

Answer: No. The parent may ask a question; the student rewrites.

PRACTICE

1. **EASY** What does “proofread” mean?
2. **EASY** Whose work must the entry be?
3. **EASY** What should you keep after sending?
4. **EASY** What is a deadline?
5. **MEDIUM** Why read aloud one last time?
6. **MEDIUM** What is integrity in a contest entry?

COMMON MISTAKES

- Last-minute changes without rereading.
- Missing the form or signature.

Make it a game · Typo Hunt. The parent hides five errors in a paragraph. First to find all five wins.

Scripture. “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men .” (Proverbs 22:29, KJV)

Diligent work is noticed; do it well whether or not it wins.

Practice: answers

1. To read slowly for small errors.
2. The student’s own.
3. A copy.
4. The last day an entry is accepted.
5. To catch missing words and rough sentences.
6. Honest facts, honest sources and honest authorship.

UNIT 9 REVIEW

Read each question aloud if needed. The student may answer in writing or out loud. Writing tasks are scored with the checklist from the unit, not for spelling alone.

1. (3 pts) Name three Patriot's Pen rules.
2. (2 pts) How long is the DAR essay for grades 6-8?
3. (2 pts) What is a bibliography?
4. (2 pts) Name two items on the final checklist.

UNIT PORTFOLIO PIECE: CONTEST ENTRY

Your finished Patriot's Pen essay and/or DAR essay, with a copy of the rules checklist.

- **Rules:** Every rule met.
- **Accuracy:** History is true and sourced.
- **Originality:** The student's own work and idea.
- **Polish:** Clean, checked final copy.

Answer key

1. Grades 6-8; 300-400 words; the theme; due October 31, 2026; own work.
2. 600-1,000 words.
3. A list of all sources used.
4. Any two.