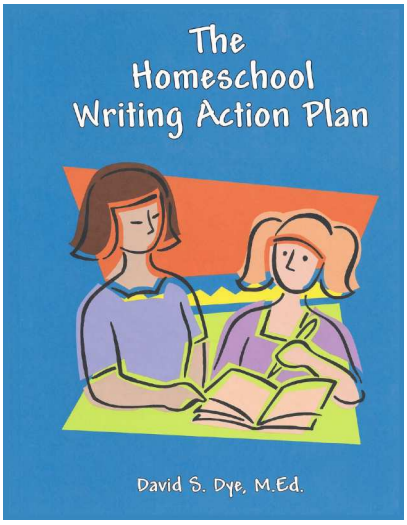
The Homeschool Writing Action Plan

by David S. Dye, M.Ed.



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THE FULL CATALOG

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— David S. Dye, M.Ed.

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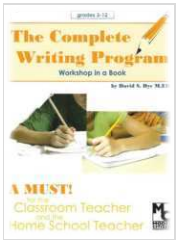
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1



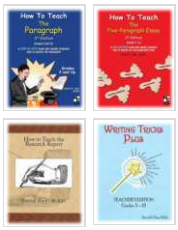
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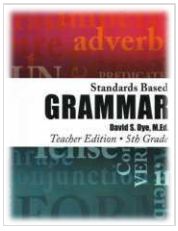
How To Teach the Paragraph — Teach your students the **One Simple Trick** that helps them master the paragraph. Grades 3+.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the homeschool parents who sacrifice so much for their students. Our country and the world are better for the work that you do. A special thank you to all the homeschool parents who have helped me put this book together. I believe that we've taken a deeply complex concept and have made it as user friendly as possible. May God bless all of you.

Permission is hereby granted to the purchaser of this book to reproduce, in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of one classroom or household, namely, one homeschooling family.

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Introduction

Writing instruction does NOT need to be difficult.

A few years ago I had a booth at a homeschool convention in St. Louis. I was selling my writing curriculum and conducting workshops. As homeschool parents walked past my booth, I would call out, "How's your writing program working for you?" The vast majority of the people were not happy with their curriculum. More surprisingly, many parents confessed that they barely taught writing at all. One parent said, "Oh, they'll figure it out."

After probing a little regarding the lack of attention they were devoting to writing instruction, several common issues became clear with parents who gave little attention to writing as well as those who were giving writing instruction their best shot.

First, these parents hated teaching writing. They didn't feel confident themselves as writers and were even less confident as instructors.

Second, they were confused by the varying approaches of different writing curricula. Even if they were able to figure out the lessons, neither the teachers nor the students were sure how most of the lessons fit into the big picture of writing. Many lessons were ignored altogether or forgotten.

A third issue was that their students hated to write as much as the parents hated teaching it. Starting each assignment was a chore, working through the writing process was torture, and creating a finished project was nearly impossible.

Finally, the most frustrating issue of all was that most of these homeschool teachers were responsible for teaching several students at various educational levels. Keeping track of writing lessons was too overwhelming. The result of these issues was that writing was barely given any attention at all.

I invited these parents to come to my one-hour workshop, and I made them this promise: "Give me one hour, and I'll show you how to make strong, confident writers with just a few simple tricks. You'll know exactly where to begin your students' writing instruction and how to get them to become college-level writers within a few short years. Furthermore, I may not be able to help you make your students love to write, but I will be able to show you how to make it as painless an experience as possible."

At the end of the hour, every parent in the room was at my booth ordering the curriculum. Many of these parents had already spent hundreds (and some spent thousands) of dollars on curriculum. They were pleased to finally have a writing curriculum that would enable them to do the following:

1. Teach to all their students simultaneously at various learning levels
2. Teach in an organized step-by-step manner
3. Teach all the major writing concepts every student needs to attain college-level writing skills.

The bottom line is that writing instruction does **not** need to be difficult. Some students may have a more natural ability than others, but everyone has the ability to master the basic structure. Furthermore, the curriculum at CreateBetterWriters.com shows parents how to teach these basics in a way that allows the students with natural talent to go as far as their abilities will take them.

My experience with the homeschool teachers in my community and at conventions has made me realize that there is one common issue with writing instruction that has not been addressed. Even when the right curriculum is found, many homeschool teachers still struggle with the order and timing of the lessons. This is completely understandable considering the numerous aspects of writing and the varying ability levels of students. That is where this book comes in.

With this book I make you one more promise: Take your time getting to know this book, and it will help guide your students from emerging writers to confident, competent writers. You will see the plan from beginning to end in just a few short pages. You will be offered help and guidance every step of the way. Finally, it will show you how to take the curriculum you already have and use it to accomplish these tasks. If you currently do not have a writing curriculum or you need something better, this book will point you to ours.

If this book is the only resource you ever use, you will have helped your students become great writers. If it inspires you to incorporate new ideas into your curriculum, your students will become even stronger writers. You will be confident in knowing where each of these lessons fits within the context of your student's writing instruction.

To summarize, the goal of this program is to give homeschool parents a single writing program that can be used with multiple grade levels simultaneously. This system is so easy to manage that you can use it to teach several students at once, whether they are at different stages in their writing development or all at the same stage. It is so comprehensive that your students will enter college with outstanding writing skills.

I wish you all the best as you journey through your homeschool adventure.

The Homeschool Writing Action Plan Overview



When do I begin?

At any time from grade 3 up.

What is the goal of this program?



This program is designed to solve three major problems for the homeschool parent:

1. To eliminate the need to spend a fortune on various writing curricula.
2. To make it easy to teach several different students in multiple grade levels using just one writing curriculum.
3. To provide a blueprint for successful writing so that teaching it is no longer a difficult task. Unlike many homeschool language arts programs, this program offers a clear, systematic approach for writing instruction.

Why is this program so easy to teach?

This program teaches you, the homeschool teacher, right along with your students. It will guide you step-by-step as you cover every aspect of writing. It starts by laying a simple foundation and then builds on it sequentially. It is easy to teach, and your students will learn more than just the mechanics of writing. Even the reluctant writers thrive with this program.

How does this program work?

The program begins by showing you one simple trick that will help you teach your students how to write a paragraph. Once they are able to write a strong paragraph, they can use that same trick to write a five-paragraph essay. When they have mastered writing a strong five-paragraph essay using this easy trick, they will then practice writing narrative stories, problem solution essays, and much more.

When your students can write strong, well-organized stories and essays, they can expand on this skill by learning to build powerful sentences using strong vocabulary words, by enhancing their descriptive writing skills, and by learning how to write a research paper. With these skills in place, not only will your students' writing be organized, but the sentences within these assignments will be intelligent, descriptive, and well thought out. As the teacher, you will be guided step-by-step through each stage of the learning.

To help you implement this program, the material in this book is presented in three parts:

Part I – **The Writing Action Plan Summary**: We will begin with a summary of the core steps of the writing action plan. This will help you determine, at all times, where you should be in the writing plan and where you are headed, as well as where each step fits into the big picture of your students' writing development.

Part II – **Pacing Guide**: The sample pacing guide provided in this book will help you decide how much time to spend on each activity. If you are beginning this program with an elementary school student, the guide will help you build your students' writing skills gradually over time. If you are beginning this program with a high school student, the guide will show you how to deliver the same information quickly and effectively.

Part III – **The Road Map**: This section demonstrates how to implement each step and provides strategies to help you reinforce the writing concepts taught. However, this section will not give you specific lesson plans. Whereas Parts 1 and 2 tell you what to teach and when to teach it, Part 3 points out key aspects of each section and provides sample worksheets and lesson plans for teaching them. One of the greatest advantages of Part 3 is that it will point you to high quality and low cost lesson plans for each step.



Do I have to use your program only, or can I use a curriculum I already have?
This book is a road map. It will show you where to begin your journey with writing instruction. You can choose to use our program, or you can use this "map" with any other curriculum you may have already acquired.

For example, the first step taught in our program is how to write a paragraph. We'll point you toward our curriculum, *How to Teach the Paragraph*, tell you its price, and show you

ideas to help reinforce this skill until your students have mastered it. However, you may already have a plan for teaching the paragraph, and you are certainly free to use it, but we highly recommend ours because we've tailored it to blend with the entire writing program easily.

Our curriculum is available at CreateBetterWriters.com.

What is the best pace for teaching this program?

If you begin this program at the elementary school level, you have the luxury of going at a slow, steady pace. Your students will have all the time they need to master each step of the plan. There is a pacing guide specifically designed for the homeschool teacher to help the elementary student completely master each step of the program.

Middle and high school students are mature enough to complete the curriculum at a faster pace. This is why there is a specific pacing guide for the middle and high school teacher. Ultimately, there is no wrong time to begin this program. If your students are old enough to begin learning to write the paragraph, they are ready to begin this program.

Why is this book so <u>in</u>expensive?

Homeschool parents are used to paying top dollar for writing curriculum and often pay more than our price for programs that are much smaller. How can a writing plan that all my students can use, is easy to implement, and will send my students into their adult lives with incredible writing skills cost so little? I'm aware of the danger of pricing this resource so low that its power is underestimated. A wise saying states, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." The fact of the matter is that I've collected this information over the past twenty years. I've taught grades 3 through 12. Most importantly, I've been working with homeschool parents for more than a decade. This plan has been put together with the help of many people. It is effective and powerful, and we want you to have it at a price that is reasonable. This book is a treasure. We don't want you to spend a treasure to have it.



Writing Action Plan
Overview

Here it is. On just a few pages you have your students' entire writing plan mapped out. Just remember to take your time and make sure your children understand each step before moving on to the next step. Keep in mind that if you move on before complete mastery is achieved, you will want to return to each step until your students have completely mastered each skill.



THE PARAGRAPH (P. 24)

Focus on the importance of prewriting and having One Main Idea in the paragraph. The paper set-up is the key. Be sure to follow up with a lot of practice. Write single paragraph stories and personal narratives. Summarize stories you read as well as concepts from social studies, science, and health.

Resource:

How To Teach the Paragraph

Time Frame:

Elementary – Two to four months

Middle / High School – One to two weeks.

SENTENCE BUILDING (P. 27)

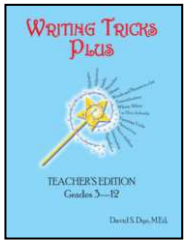
Teach your students to write *descriptive* and *intelligent* sentences. Teach four Writing Tricks and two Show-Not-Tell lessons. Along with CreateBetterWriters.com material, find descriptive writing lessons and sentence building lessons. Focus on practicing each skill until it is internalized.

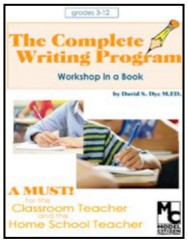
Resources:

Writing Tricks Plus

The Complete Writing Program: Ch. 3 and Ch. 5

Your language arts curriculum.





Time Frame: Two to four weeks

Pages 11 – 15: Skipped

Pacing Guide

for

Implementing the Action Plan at

Grade 3

Grade 3

First Semester

The Paragraph (pp. 24–26)

Sentence Building (pp. 27–36)

Vocabulary Practice (pp. 37–38)

Second Semester

Advanced third graders have been known to progress through the steps as rapidly as older students. However, don't feel pressured to rush through the program. The key is to master the paragraph and to build strong sentences. During the second semester, offer plenty of practice writing paragraphs, building stronger sentences, and improving vocabulary. See The Paragraph (p. 24) for help.

Grade 4

First Semester

Review paragraph writing and practice writing tricks and show-not-tell during journal time.

Writing Assessment #1 (pp. 39–43)

Research Report (Introduction Only) — Keep it basic! (pp. 43–45)

Note: Grade 4 is very early for students to learn how to write research reports. However, writing these together as a class is a good way to review the principles of writing a paragraph. You can find main ideas and supporting details together.

Sentence Building (pp. 27–36)

Vocabulary Practice (pp. 37–38)

Pages 18 – 19: Skipped

Pacing Guide
for
Implementing the Action Plan at
Grade 6

Grade 6

First Semester

The Paragraph (pp. 24–26)

Sentence Building (pp. 27–36)

Vocabulary Practice (pp. 37–38)

Five Paragraph Essay: **Only cover prewriting through "The Boring but Well-Organized Introduction"**
(pp. 46–48)

Second Semester

Writing Assessment #1 (pp. 39–43)

Research Report: Introduction Only (pp. 43–45)

Grade 7

First Semester

Five Paragraph Essay: Teach the "Interesting Introduction"
(Continued from Grade 6) (pp. 46–48)

Writing Assessment (pp. 39–43)

Sentence Building (pp. 27–36)

Vocabulary Practice (pp. 37–38)

Five Paragraph Essay: Multiple Genres and Writing Assessment (pp. 46–48)

Second Semester

Research Report: The Mini-Report (pp. 43–45)

Pages 21 – 23: Skipped



The Road Map



What can I expect from this section?

As stated in the introduction, this book is a road map. It will show you where to begin, what directions to take, and how to achieve your goal of helping your students become strong writers. If you have your own curriculum that you're comfortable and familiar with, feel free to use it. However, if you feel that your resources do not meet your needs, we've customized these lesson plans specifically for homeschool teachers.

Writing instruction is one of the most difficult concepts to teach, even for many professional educators. This writing action plan is a step-by-step process that takes as much of the mystery out of the process as possible.

Please keep in mind that this book contains some of those step-by-step procedures. The other books in our program play an integral role in rounding out the full writing curriculum.

In this section, we will discuss the key points of each writing concept and offer advice on how to teach them. However, for specific lesson plans and instructional guidelines, you will need to do one of three things: 1) Develop a plan using our advice and your research, 2) Rely on your language arts curriculum, or 3) Use the books we have developed, which are available at CreateBetterWriters.com.

THE PARAGRAPH

Resource: How To Teach the Paragraph

Time Frame: Elementary – Two to four months
Middle / High School – One to two weeks

Introduction:

The paragraph is the foundation of writing. Every book, essay, research report, and business letter is comprised of paragraphs. When you teach the paragraph well, all the other types of writing will fall into place. Even older students need to understand the

importance of writing a well-organized paragraph. They may think they already know how, and might actually be able to write a strong paragraph. A quick review, especially of the paper set-up, is a good way to determine their skill level and a good way to begin a writing program with students of any age or ability. Take as much time as needed for your students to master this skill. Once they do, your students will master further skills more quickly and retain them for a lifetime.

Key Concepts:

1. **Focus on one main idea**. If your students grasp this concept, they will avoid many pitfalls. When they begin to understand that new main ideas start new paragraphs, they will begin to grasp how writing is organized.
2. **Prewriting**: Knowing how to properly set up their paper is key to writing success. Make sure the students clearly define their main idea. Teach them to gather information only on that main idea.
3. **Parts of the paragraph**:
   Topic Sentence – Tells the one main idea.
   Supporting Details – Explain the one main idea.
   Closing Sentence – Summarizes the one main idea.
   Transition Sentence – When there are more paragraphs to follow, the transition sentence will bridge the current main idea with the next main idea.
4. **Follow-Up activities**: Be sure to follow up with several practice activities.

Follow-up Activities

When your students have truly mastered writing a properly constructed paragraph, they will be able to prewrite and write a basic paragraph in about ten minutes. Younger students will need frequent and consistent practice to internalize this skill. Use the tips below to help keep the key concepts of paragraph writing fresh in your students' minds. Have your students choose one of the following writing prompts and write a five-to-seven sentence paragraph with one main idea based on the theme of the prompt.

1. **Stories**: Write short, one paragraph stories. Here are some topics:
   - The Thing Under My Bed!
   - A Fun Day with a Friend
   - The Piñata
   - The Silly Cat

