

# Introduction to Foundations of Writing

## Why do we study writing?

- To learn. When we must repeat what we know, in our own words, we internalize it better.
- To organize our thoughts. Writing requires taking many bits of information and organizing them into a logical format.
- To evaluate what we read, hear, and observe. We often have to explain things when we write, and as we explain to others, we understand it better ourselves.
- To communicate our beliefs clearly and persuasively to others. This is the most important reason we write. We write for an **audience**.

The ultimate reason we write is ***to share the good news of our Messiah*** with the world. In addition, we need to express ourselves with manners.

In other words, we ***speak and write*** with correct form so that others won't be distracted by our display of ignorance. The *messenger* gets out of the way, so that people can hear the *message*. (See [Romans 10:14-15](#).)

## Topics Covered

Our writing curriculum is intended for the entire family to use together. Each lesson includes ideas for students at various levels, but everyone is working on a similar topic at the same time. It is excellent for first-time writers, as well as those who need practice.

*Note: We assume that writing students are old enough to be able to read well on their own and to have an interest in books. We would delay formal "writing" class until a child has hit that level. Some students are ready by 8 or 9. Others aren't ready until 11-12 or even older. There is no rush...*

Some of the types of writing we'll do include:

- Paragraphs
- Notetaking
- Outlining
- Personal Writing (Journaling and Reminiscing)
- Subject Writing (Descriptions, Eyewitness Accounts, Summaries, Firsthand Experiences, Interviews, Character Profiles, Historical Profiles)
- Creative Writing (Poetry, Stories, Dialogues, Scripts, and Plays)
- Reflective Writing (Illustrations, Pet Peeves, Explanations, Opposing Ideas, Experiences, Personal Commentaries, Reflection)

- Essay Writing (Narrative, Descriptive, Expository, Persuasive)
- Academic Writing (Explanations, Comparisons, Cause and Effect, Definitions, Arguments, Problem Solving, and Lab Reports)
- Business Writing (Letters, Job Applications, Memos)
- Book Reports and Literary Analysis
- Research Paper (one project per year)

## How to Use This Curriculum

### WEEKLY FORMAT

Each “week” of lesson plans is set up so that 2-3 days will be spent learning and practicing new writing techniques, then 2-3 more days of writing will be assigned relatively independently, usually on a topic of the student’s choice. Our goal is to allow Mom several days a week of intense study with her children, yet also give Mom a few days to accomplish housework, errands, and other responsibilities. You are always welcome to spend more time together than the curriculum suggests.

One difficulty students often have is coming up with a *topic* to write about. We try to give suggestions, since we realize that children don’t have as many life experiences to draw from as seasoned writers.

### LESSON PLAN FORMAT

The lessons include a “Teacher’s Manual” and “Student Book” that are designed to be printed and inserted into 3-ring binders.

Each day, the student will be able to read about the day’s assignment in his Student Book, so he can get started on writing during his own time. Later, Mom can review his writing by using the tips and checklists we give her in the Teacher’s Manual. We will then give suggestions for a 5-minute “Meeting Time” between Mom and Student, where they can review what was learned. (If Mom is teaching several students, she can have a Meeting Time with all of them together, but she should plan for the meeting to take a bit more than 5 minutes.)

### SUPPLIES NEEDED

The student will need:

- Student Book (download and print these assignments each week).
- Composition Book or plain notebook paper.
- 3”x5” lined index cards.
- Pen or pencil (or access to computer, if typing is preferred). Pencils are nice for correcting, but pens are easier to write with before feeling fatigued.

- A small pad of paper, spiral notebook, journal, or even a section of student's writing notebook for keeping track of new ideas.

The teacher will need:

- Teacher's Manual with "Meeting Time" notes for Mom.
- A pen of a different color than student is using. (Maybe even a red pen... *gasp*...) We'll help you learn to use this pen kindly.

## **SUGGESTED AGE AND READINESS FOR THIS CURRICULUM**

We believe that it's better to wait for a little maturity before beginning a formal writing program. It's best for younger students to wait until they've had time to be "filled up" a bit, with lots of reading, being read to, and life experience. Also, if they are still "decoding" words for themselves or still learning handwriting, then writing will be tough. We would suggest waiting on writing until you start to see a child pick up a full-length chapter book \*on his own\* just for the fun of reading. That would be a good indicator that his mind is starting to fill up (like a sponge) and has some ideas that want to be squeezed out. Until then, we suggest Level 3 of our Phonics/Reading, which includes plenty of dictation, plus daily copywork (of Scripture).

## **LESSONS BY WEEK**

- 1 – Eyewitness Descriptions
- 2 – Writing to Your Audience
- 3 – Taking Notes
- 4 – Topic Sentences
- 5 – Writing Letters
- 6 – The Writing Process (Plan, Write, Rewrite, Edit)
- 7 – Responding to What You Read
- 8 – When You Don't Know What to Write/Concise Writing
- 9 – Creative Writing: Poetry
- 10 – Creative Writing: Short Stories 1
- 11 – Creative Writing: Short Stories 2
- 12 – Proofreading
- 13 – Character Sketches
- 14 – Reflective Writing
- 15 – Paragraphs: Connector Words
- 16 – Paragraphs: Sequence, Cause/Effect, Comparison/Contrast
- 17 – Summary Writing
- 18 – Essay Questions 1
- 19 – Essay Questions 2
- 20 – Essay Questions 3
- 21 – Essay Questions 4
- 22 – Plagiarism, Quotations, Notations

- 23 – Creative Writing: Testimonies
- 24 – Multiple Paragraphs, Notetaking/Outlining
- 25 – Writing Illustrations
- 26 – Introductions
- 27 – Conclusions
- 28 – Research Papers: Choosing a Subject
- 29 – Research Papers: Using the Library
- 30 – Research Papers: Bibliography
- 31 – Research Papers: Notes
- 32 – Research Papers: Outline
- 33 – Research Papers: First Draft
- 34 – Research Papers: Footnotes and Formatting
- 35 – Research Papers: Second Draft
- 36 – Using Writing in Life

## Need Help Teaching Writing?

We'd love to help! Contact us if you're having trouble understanding or explaining a topic. We'll make a video and show you how we teach it at our house. That's what community is for!

## About Foundations of Writing

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Scripture taken from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

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***“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12).***

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# Writing - Week 1

## Teacher's Manual

### Notes

We have included everything that your Student has in his Student Book, plus we've listed some things you can discuss with your Student during your daily "Meeting Time."

### Day 1

This week we're going to learn how to write an eyewitness account. The dictionary says an "eyewitness" is "a person who actually sees some act, occurrence, or thing and can give a firsthand account of it."<sup>1</sup> An eyewitness can describe what he saw with his own eyes because he was actually present at an event.

The Bible teaches that only YHWH God was present at the Creation of the world. He was the only eyewitness to that spectacular event. We are very thankful that He preserved a history of Creation for us.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. These are the **generations** of the heavens and the earth when they were created..." (Genesis 2:1-4, ESV).

The word *generations* in verse 4 means a "history." The Bible teaches that Adam also wrote down a history of the events of the first days after Creation.

"This is the book of the generations of Adam..." (Genesis 5:1a, ESV).

Read this quote from *Genesis: Finding Our Roots*, by Ruth Beechick (p. 28):

You can read a book written by the first man, Adam. Yes, the first man could write. We know this was written, because it is called a *book* in its closing line. Also, it does not have the poetry forms and mythological sound of an oral history. Instead, it has precise details, as an eyewitness might tell.

Adam and Eve were eyewitness to these events. They were the only people in the world to know the paradise garden with its Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil. They were the only ones who knew what life was like

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<sup>1</sup> eyewitness. Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/eyewitness> (accessed: August 05, 2013).



without sin. They, alone, walked with God and talked face to face with Him. What do you suppose God told Adam during those walks?...

We have the great privilege of reading this ancient book written by the first man who ever lived.

In your writing notebook, make a list of some events you saw with your own eyes. When have you been an **eyewitness**? (Try to list as many events as your age. For instance, if you are ten years old, can you list 10 events?)

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 1)**

*Sometimes students have a hard time **getting started** with ideas for their list. If making a list comes easily for you as a mother (because you're always making lists for this or that), remember to be patient with your student. Can you reminisce with him and help his brain get started?*

**Day 2**

When an eyewitness tells what he saw, he depends mostly on his sense of sight. However, when a writer recreates an event for his readers, he likes to use as many senses as possible.

Since YHWH created us with the ability to experience His creation with many senses – sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste – a writer can use those senses to draw a reader into the experience. As you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste an event, right alongside the eyewitness, you'll feel like you were really there!

In your writing notebook, choose one of the events you listed yesterday. Which one do you remember best?

Make a list of things you remember about that event, trying to include all 5 senses:

Sight   Sound   Touch   Smell   Taste

(By the way, why do you think you remember that event so well? Could it be because of all the senses that were involved? A good writer pays attention to details, even small things like sounds and smells. Try to learn to pay attention to tiny details of the world YHWH created! It's very enjoyable, and it's also good for your mind.)



❑ **Meeting Time (Day 2)**

*If your student has a hard time thinking of words for senses other than sight, try blindfolding him for a few moments. Ask him what he can hear, touch, smell (and even taste?) in the room at that moment.*

**Day 3**

If an eyewitness needs to appear in court to testify before a judge, he must do more than just tell the judge what the crime scene smelled like. The judge will probably want some facts presented that will prove the eyewitness was really there.

In fact, the Torah tells us,

“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15, ESV).

Let’s pretend for a moment that no one believes you were really present at the event you’ve been writing about this week. What kind of evidence can you present?

Writers have always loved the “Six Serving Men,” or six questions you can answer to present evidence.

Who?  
What?  
When?  
Where?  
Why?  
How?

In your writing notebook, think about the event you’ve been describing. Use the “Six Serving Men” to make a list of details about that event. Try to have something for each of these men, because they are serving as your eyewitnesses to prove you were really there!





☐ **Meeting Time (Day 3)**

*We'll be using the "Six Serving Men" repeatedly this year. You might want to encourage your student to make and decorate a wall chart to display these six questions.*

**Day 4**

In your writing notebook, take some time today to actually write down a story about the event you've been thinking about all week.

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 4)**

*Writers need a supportive audience! This would be a good day to have your student share his writing with the family. Make it a fun and encouraging event.*

**Day 5**

In your writing notebook, copy Exodus 15:1-11.

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 5)**

*Good writers need examples of good writing. Today's Scripture passage is written in a form of Hebrew poetry. (See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song\\_of\\_the\\_sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_the_sea)) You may want to discuss how composing songs is often used as a way to worship YHWH, especially when we give "testimony" of what He has done for us personally.*





# Writing - Week 2

## Teacher's Manual

### Notes

*We have included everything that your Student has in his Student Book, plus we've listed some things you can discuss with your Student during your daily "Meeting Time."*

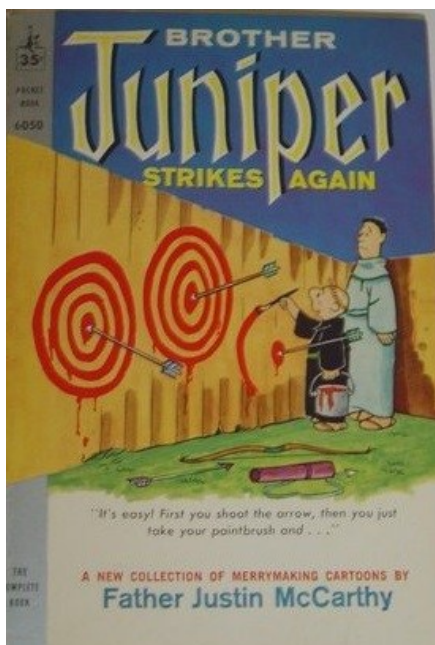
### Day 1

This week we're going to learn how to target our writing for a certain "audience."

Unless we're writing for our diary, everything we say on paper is supposed to be read by someone else. Of course, we want everyone to love what we say, right? We think our writing is pretty good, and we want them to like it, too.

Once there was a man who was practicing shooting arrows at a fence. Instead of aiming at a target, he would shoot an arrow at the fence and then walk over and paint a red target around whatever the arrow struck. His friend walked up and said, "How did you ever learn to shoot your arrows so well? You never miss the target!"

The man replied, "It's easy! First you shoot the arrow, then you just take your paintbrush and draw the target around it! You'll never miss!"



When you write something, you might be tempted to shoot arrows of words into the world and hope that everyone is "hit" by your words. You might not aim at any particular person, or target, so you might wonder why no one wants to read your words.



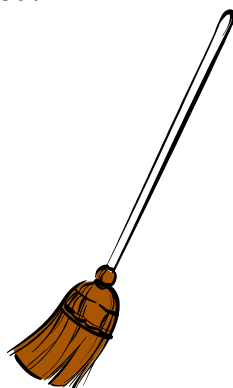
If someone says, “Who were you hoping would read what you wrote?” you might answer, “Everybody! I want the whole world to read it!”

But people are very different from each other. Nothing you write can possibly reach all people. That’s why we have so many books and authors. (An author is another word for a writer.)

What kinds of writing are the best? Is a story better than a poem? Is a newspaper better than the Internet? Is a textbook better than a picture book? It just depends. It depends on who is reading it. What style do they like best? Someone who loves a book about the history of World War 2 probably won’t pick up a book about a little girl who traveled to a little cottage in the middle of the woods.

For your writing to ever be read, you need to think about the person who will be reading it. Discover what that person is like and what he or she wants to read about, then write for that person’s interests. He will probably be very happy to want to read what you wrote!

In your writing notebook, tell 3 reasons why **each** of the following people would want to buy this **amazing broom** from you!



- ☐ A group of 3-year-olds
- ☐ An 80-year-old man who lives in a nursing home
- ☐ A live television audience of over 100 million people watching a football game
- ☐ Children who live in an orphanage in Africa
- ☐ A well-dressed businessman rushing to a meeting in New York City

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 1)**

*Which people groups were easiest for your student to relate to? Which were most difficult? How can you help them understand different kinds of people better?*



## **Day 2**

Read Jonah 1:1-3.

- ☐ Who was the prophet Jonah's audience?
- ☐ Why do you think Jonah ran away from YHWH?

Read Jonah 3:1-10.

- ☐ What did his audience do when Jonah preached to them?

Read Jonah 4:1-3.

- ☐ Why was Jonah upset?

Read Jonah 4:11.

- ☐ Tell more about Jonah's audience.
- ☐ Why did YHWH care so much about them? Do you think that knowing more about his audience helped Jonah realize why YHWH cared about them?

In your writing notebook, tell about someone who lives nearby you, whom you do *not* know very well. You must try to write at least 3 sentences.

Now tell about the last person you invited over to your home. It should be someone you know well and really enjoy. You may only write 3 sentences.

Think about it: How does getting to know someone help you write about them?

### ☐ **Meeting Time (Day 2)**

*Having hospitality, or regularly inviting people over for a meal or just dessert, is a wonderful way to force ourselves to get to know people better? How can parents and children work together to schedule times for meeting new people?*

## **Day 3**

Read John 4:4-18.

- ☐ Who was Yeshua's "audience" at the well that day?
- ☐ How well did He know her?

Did you see how Yeshua didn't just talk to the woman, but they had a conversation. First one spoke, then the other spoke. They asked each other questions.

This is how we communicate with others in real life. However, when you're writing, there is no one to talk back to you or ask you questions.

To help, have an imaginary reader in your head as you write.



- What is this person like? (You can use your Six Serving Men to help you find out. **Who** is it? **What** is he or she like? **When** is he reading your paper? **Where** is he when he's reading it? **Why** is he reading it? **How** does it make him feel?
- What kind of response do you want from your reader? Do you want to move him to tears? Do you want to bug him? Do you want to convince him to do something? Do you want to prove that you're right? Do you want to teach him how to play the guitar? Do you want him to know how you felt the night you were camping under the stars with your brother and the raccoon came out of the woods? You will know you've succeeded when you get the response you were hoping for. He cries, he feels bugged, he joined your club, he learns how to play the G chord on the guitar, or he knows what growing up in your family is like.
- How much does my reader already know or care about my topic? Let's say you were teaching your reader to make pizza sauce, and you told her to add a tablespoon of oregano. She might think in her head, "What is oregano? Is it a powder, or do I need to go outside and pick it from my mother's herb garden? Then what do I do with it?" On the other hand, if you were teaching your mother to make pizza sauce, you might not need to give her as many details, since she's made pizza sauce many times before.

There are many more questions you can ask about your audience as you write. The point is that you need to **have** an audience, or a reader, in your head as you write. Like Yeshua and the Samaritan woman at the well, have an imaginary conversation with your reader, and answer your reader's questions and concerns.

In your writing notebook, think about the amazing broom that you were selling a few days ago. Make up an imaginary reader, and draw a picture of what that reader looks like. All around the picture, write words that tell details about your reader. Be sure to think about why your reader would love to buy your broom, how he or she will use it, and why he or she would even want to care about your broom.

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 3)**

*Help your student refer to the "Six Serving Men" wall chart that was made last week. What other questions should they ask when describing their reader?*



#### **Day 4**

In your writing notebook, take some time today to actually write down a short commercial for your amazing broom. This commercial will have no pictures, since it will be playing on the radio or online (as an audio only). Think about your audience, and be sure to answer any questions they might have about your broom.

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 4)**

*Sometimes a short assignment is more difficult to write than a long assignment. For today, do not worry about the length of the student's commercial. We'll learn how to edit in a future lesson.*

#### **Day 5**

In your writing notebook, teach someone how to use your amazing broom to sweep a room in your home.

☐ **Meeting Time (Day 5)**

*It might help the student to actually go and sweep a room before doing this writing assignment. The student might wish to keep a pad of paper handy while sweeping, in case he thinks of things he wants to remember to tell his reader.*



# Writing - Week 3

## Teacher's Manual

### Notes

*We have included everything that your Student has in his Student Book, plus we've listed some things you can discuss with your Student during your daily "Meeting Time."*

### Day 1

This week we're going to learn how to take notes when we hear someone speaking, and then we'll learn how to turn those notes back into writing again.

When you hear someone teach about something, why should you take notes? Taking notes helps you become personally involved in what you're hearing. It also helps you focus in on the most important things that the speaker is saying. As you think about how to write your notes down, your brain will be actively working with and "digesting" what you hear. In other words, taking notes helps you remember what you've heard.

Scientists have found that we forget at least half of what we learn within 24 hours of hearing it. However, if we take notes, our memories will hold on to much more of our new learning.

During the time of Yeshua, a rabbi's disciples would not write on the Sabbath day. They would hold their master's teaching in their heads until the sun set, then they would rush to help each other make notes of everything they had heard taught that day.

When should you take notes? A common time is during a sermon or when you hear someone teaching from Scripture. Other times are in classes. (Kids who go to school are expected to take notes, because they will be tested over what the teacher explains in class.)

If you work for someone else someday, your employer might like for you to take notes when he teaches you how to do something correctly in his company. You might also take notes when answering the telephone, so that you can remember what the caller wanted to tell you. Your own mother might faint if you take notes when she asks you to do a chore.

How do you take notes? First, like the disciples during Yeshua's time, you don't need to write everything down. You mostly need key words or main thoughts that will help you summarize what was explained. Feel free to use abbreviations.

Secondly, listen for the teacher to say clue words like *first* or *next* or *in conclusion*. These are usually good to write down.



Third, try to be neat. Put each new thought on its own line, rather than cramming everything together. Leave plenty of white space around your notes so that you can add ideas later as you think of them.

Watch this YouTube about how to make sunny-side up eggs. In your writing notebook, take notes explaining how to make the eggs.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MhzKI4q5FE>

(You might want to check how thorough your notes are by then going into the kitchen and actually making sunny-side up eggs.)

**☐ Meeting Time (Day 1)**

*When I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I went through a dozen eggs before finally figuring out how to make sunny-side up eggs. You will be tempted to want to step in and help your student (if he or she isn't an experienced cook), but resist the temptation. Urge the student to learn to take written notes and then to follow those written instructions. ☺*

**Day 2**

Sometimes we take notes from something that we read. We summarize what we've read by making a list of instructions or things we should remember.

Read Exodus 25:31-40, and in your writing notebook, make a list of how-to instructions, explaining how to make a lampstand for the tabernacle.

Now read Exodus 37:17-24. As you read about how the skilled workmen made the lampstand for real, place a checkmark next to each item in your notes. Did your notes include all of the same instructions that were followed in this passage? Did this passage leave anything out? Did it add any new details?

(You might enjoy making a lampstand out of playdough, carefully pretending to follow the instructions you wrote down in your notes.)

**☐ Meeting Time (Day 2)**

*It can be difficult to learn to "picture" things from words rather than from videos, especially for visual learners. However, learning to pay attention to writing is an important skill that will not only prepare our students for life but also for obeying the Written Word of God. Taking notes can help someone bridge the gap between visual and written. Encourage your student to add pictures and diagrams to the words in his notes.*



### **Day 3**

Another time to take notes is when interviewing someone. Let's pretend today to interview your mother. You are going to ask her what she wishes you would do to have the kitchen clean in 15 minutes or less. Be thorough in your notes.

Now let's review from previous weeks. In your writing notebook, write each of the Six Serving Men (who, what, when, where, why, and how). Did your mother include each of these in her kitchen-cleaning instructions? If not, go back and ask her more questions.

Finally, let's think of an audience. Do you have a younger sibling who isn't very good at cleaning the kitchen? If not, can you think of someone who has never cleaned your kitchen, so that you could pretend to teach that person the routine your mother prefers?

In your writing notebook, think of your "audience" (your sibling or this other person). Use the notes you took to explain how your mother would like to have her kitchen cleaned if this person had 15 minutes or less in which to do it.

In conclusion, you might enjoy watching this short YouTube on how to clean a kitchen in 15 minutes or less. Using a yellow highlighter or marker, mark the things in your notes which agreed with this video. Mark with another color the things your mother would not agree with!

<https://youtu.be/Vos3br2docY>

#### **Meeting Time (Day 3)**

*Have fun with the interview. Try to be natural, and allow your student to come up with "interview questions" for you, as if he were a television news announcer. Don't give too much information (unless he asks for it). See if he comes back with more questions later.*

### **Day 4**

Watch this short video on how to train a dog to sit. Take good notes.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sKZQ9MVZma8>

In your writing notebook, use your notes to try to remember word-for-word the video's instructions on how to train a dog to sit. Write it as close to the original as you can.

Now compare your writing to the video. How did you do?





❑ **Meeting Time (Day 4)**

*Sometimes a short assignment is more difficult to write than a long assignment. For today, do not worry about the length of the student's commercial. We'll learn how to edit in a future lesson.*

**Day 5**

Sometimes you can take notes entirely in pictures. Visit this link online to see some pictures that can help you remember the Ten Commandments.

<http://www.fishersofkids.com/commands.htm>

In your writing notebook, copy Exodus 20:1-17 very carefully. Add pictures (your own or similar to the ones you saw online) to help you remember these commands.

Plan to take notes the next time you hear Scripture taught to you. What tools should you have ready? Be sure to show your notes to your parents afterward, and explain to them with words what you learned from the teaching.

❑ **Meeting Time (Day 5)**

*Do you and your spouse take notes when you hear Scripture taught? How can this become a family tradition? How can you later use your notes to "talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:7)?*