

THE COMPLETE WRITER

Level Four
Workbook for Writing with Ease

INSTRUCTOR SECTION

By

Susan Wise Bauer



Peace Hill Press

18021 The Glebe Lane
Charles City, VA 23030

www.peacehillpress.com

**This workbook is to be used in conjunction with
THE COMPLETE WRITER: WRITING WITH EASE
Strong Fundamentals**

ISBN 978-1-933339-25-2

**Available at www.peacehillpress.com or
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READING SELECTIONS

- Week 1:** “The Emperor’s New Clothes” and “The Leap-Frog” by Hans Christian Andersen
- Week 2:** *A Little History of the World* by E. H. Gombrich, trans. Caroline Mustill
- Week 3:** “The True History of Little Golden-Hood” from *The Red Fairy Book* by Andrew Lang
- Week 4:** *Leonardo da Vinci: Renaissance Genius* by Barbara O’Connor and *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* trans. by Jean Paul Richter
- Week 5:** *The Book of Three* by Lloyd Alexander
- Week 6:** *The Life of Charlemagne* by Einhard trans. by Lewis Thorpe and *Ibn Fadlan’s Journey to Russia* trans. by Richard N. Frye
- Week 7:** “Lazy Baboons,” from *The Girl Who Married a Lion and Other Tales from Africa* by Alexander McCall Smith and *Seven Wonders of Ancient Africa* by Michael Woods and Mary B. Woods
- Week 8:** *The Young Oxford Book of Astronomy* by Simon and Jacqueline Mitton and *The Real Mars* by Michael Hanlon
- Week 9:** *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells and *How to Live on Mars: A Trusty Guidebook to Surviving and Thriving on the Red Planet* by Robert Zubrin
- Week 10:** *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster
- Week 11:** *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott and *The Siege of Washington, D.C.* by Captain F. Colburn Adams
- Week 12:** *The Story of the World, Volume Four: The Modern Age* by Susan Wise Bauer
- Week 13:** *The Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss
- Week 14:** *The Adventure Book of Chemistry* by Lazer Goldberg and *Splitting the Atom* by Alan Morton
- Week 15:** *Platinum* by Ian Wood and *A Child’s Geography of the World* by V. M. Hillyer
- Week 16:** *Outcast* by Rosemary Sutcliff
- Week 17:** *A Child’s History of England* by Charles Dickens
- Week 18:** *Pioneer Germ Fighters* by Navin Sullivan
- Week 19:** *The Story of the World, Volume Three: Early Modern Times* by Susan Wise Bauer
- Week 20:** “Young Benjamin Franklin” by Nathaniel Hawthorne and *Fifty Famous People* by James Baldwin
- Week 21:** “The Death of Robin Hood” and “Our Biggest Fish” by Eugene Field
- Week 22:** *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri
- Week 23:** *Joan of Arc* by Nancy Wilson Ross and *Joan of Arc* by Hilaire Belloc
- Week 24:** *Famous Men of the Middle Ages* by John H. Haaren and A. B. Poland
- Week 25:** “The Roly-Poly Pudding” by Beatrix Potter
- Week 26:** *The Dawn of Canadian History: A Chronicle of Aboriginal Canada* by Stephen Leacock
- Week 27:** *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George
- Week 28:** *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and *Fifty Famous People* by James Baldwin
- Week 29:** “The Painted Ceiling” by Amy Lowell and “Jim, Who Ran Away from his Nurse and was Eaten by a Lion” by Hilaire Belloc
- Week 30:** *Albert Einstein, Citizen of the World* by William Wise and *Albert Einstein and the Theory of Relativity* by Robert Cwiklik
- Week 31:** *The Story of the World, Volume Four: The Modern Age* by Susan Wise Bauer and *The War Diary of the Emperor Frederick III—1870–1871* trans. Alfred Richmond Allinson
- Week 32:** *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams
- Week 33:** *A Child’s History of England* by Charles Dickens
- Week 34:** *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- Week 35:** *A Day in Old Athens* by William Stearns Davis
- Week 36:** *Black Beauty: The Autobiography of a Horse* by Anna Sewell

WEEK 1

DAY ONE: Narration and Original Sentence Exercise*Student Pages 1–3***Focus:** *Identifying the central narrative thread in a passage and writing original sentences*

Pull out Student Pages 1–2 and 3. Ask the student to write her name and the date on Student Page 3.

Allow the student to read the story on Student Pages 1–2.

You will now ask the student to summarize the passage. She may glance back at the passage while she is thinking about what to say, but she should not look at it while telling you her summary.

This selection lends itself to a narrative, story-like retelling. To guide the student towards this type of summary, say, “In three or four sentences, tell me what happened to the Emperor in the story” (this will help to keep her from getting bogged down in descriptions of the thieves). Her answer should resemble one of the following:

“The Emperor ordered new, splendid clothes from two men who offered to make him magical clothing. When the weavers showed him the new clothes, he could not see them—but he didn’t want to admit it, so he pretended to put them on. Everyone else pretended to see them too, until a child said, “The Emperor has nothing on!””

“An Emperor who loved clothes ordered magic robes from two thieves. They told him that the clothes would be invisible to anyone who was stupid or unworthy. When the Emperor went to see the new clothes, he saw nothing at all—but he was embarrassed to say so. He pretended to put them on and marched out in front of his people with no clothes on.”

“The Emperor bought magic clothes that would be invisible to anyone who was simple or unfit. The tricksters who promised to make the clothes took his money, and then showed him empty looms. But the Emperor was ashamed to say that he couldn’t see anything, so he pretended to admire the clothes. He even pretended to put them on—and almost everyone else pretended to see them too.”

If she has difficulty condensing the story, ask the following three questions:

What did the Emperor think he was buying?

What did he actually get?

Why didn’t he admit that he was being robbed?

Then have the student repeat her answers in order; this will form her brief summary. Write down the student’s narration on the lines below, but do not allow her to watch.

Now ask her whether she can repeat the first sentence (or first and second sentences, depending on length) of the narration to herself. If not, read her the first or first two sentences of the narration only. Tell her to listen carefully, since you will only read once. Encourage her to repeat the sentence or sentences to herself until she can remember, and then to say the words out loud to herself as she writes on Student Page 3.

Give all necessary help in spelling and punctuation.

DAY TWO: Dictation Exercise

Student Page 4

Focus: *Remembering lengthy sentences*

Pull out Student Page 4. Ask the student to write her name and the date.

Tell the student that today's dictation sentence is also from "The Emperor's New Clothes."

Dictate the following sentence to the student three times. Before you read, tell the student that you will read the sentence only three times before asking her to write, and will not repeat it afterwards. Also tell her that today's dictation is one long sentence, with three commas in it.

The imposters requested him very courteously to be so good as to come nearer their looms, and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colors were not very beautiful, while at the same time pointing to the empty frames.

Now ask the student to repeat the sentence back to you before she writes. If she forgets, tell her to go back to the beginning of the sentence and recite it again to jog her memory. If necessary, you may then prompt the student with single words.

Watch the student as she writes, and correct her at once if she begins to make a mistake. You may need to help her with the spelling of "courteously."

DAY THREE: Narration and Original Sentence Exercise*Student Pages 5–7***Focus:** *Identifying the central narrative thread in a passage and writing original sentences*

Pull out Student Pages 5–6 and 7. Ask the student to write her name and the date on Student Page 7.

Allow the student to read the story on Student Pages 5–6.

You will now ask the student to summarize the passage. She may glance back at the passage while she is thinking about what to say, but she should not look at it while telling you her summary.

This selection lends itself to a narrative, story-like retelling. To guide the student towards this type of summary, say, “In three or four sentences, tell me what happened to each of the three creatures in the story.” Her answer should resemble one of the following:

“A flea, a grasshopper, and a Leap-frog had a jumping contest. The flea jumped so high that no one could see him. The grasshopper jumped into the king’s face. But the Leap-frog jumped into the princess’s lap. He won the contest, because the princess was the highest in the land.”

“A flea, a grasshopper, and a leap-frog had a jumping contest. Whoever jumped highest would win the princess. The flea jumped so high that no one saw him and the grasshopper jumped into the king’s face. But the leap-frog jumped into the princess’s lap and won.”

“A flea, a grasshopper, and a leap-frog had a jumping contest to see who could jump highest. The leap-frog won, because he jumped into the princess’s lap. So the leap-frog won the princess, the flea went to a foreign land and was killed, and the grasshopper sat on a bank and sang.”

If the student has difficulty with this summary, ask the following three questions to help focus her thoughts:

Who were the three creatures, and what were they doing?

Which creature won?

Why did he win?

This prompt will steer her towards a summary that resembles the first and second answer. Alternatively, you can ask:

Who won the contest?

Why did he win?

What happened to the flea and the grasshopper afterwards?

The answers to these questions will make up the student’s summary.

Write down the student’s narration on the lines below, but do not allow her to watch.

Now ask her whether she can repeat the first sentence (or first and second sentences, depending on length) of the narration to herself. If not, read her the first or first two sentences of the narration only. Tell her to listen carefully, since you will only read once. Encourage her to repeat the sentence or sentences to herself until she can remember, and then to say the words out loud to herself as she writes on Student Page 7.

Give all necessary help in spelling and punctuation. The student may either capitalize the names or leave them lower-case; both are correct.

DAY FOUR: Dictation Exercise

Student Page 8

Focus: *Proper nouns and semicolons*

Pull out Student Page 8. Ask the student to write her name and the date.

Dictate the following sentences to the student three times. Before you read, tell the student that you will read the sentences only three times before asking her to write, and will not repeat them afterwards. Also tell her that there are two sentences, one of which has a semicolon in the middle. Remind the student that a semicolon links two independent sentences without a coordinating conjunction.

When you dictate the sentences, be sure to make a long pause at the period, and a shorter pause at the semicolon. Pause for a briefer time at the commas. Indicate the ends of the sentences by allowing your voice to drop, while keeping your voice steady at the semicolon. Indicate the proper noun “International Children’s Book Day” by pausing slightly before speaking it and then using a more formal tone.

Hans Christian Andersen was born in Denmark on April 2, 1805. Today, his birthday is an international holiday celebrating reading; it is called International Children’s Book Day.

Now ask the student to repeat the sentence back to you before she writes. If she forgets, tell her to go back to the beginning of the sentences and recite them again to jog her memory. If necessary, you may then prompt the student with single words.

Watch the student as she writes, and correct her at once if she begins to make a mistake. You may need to tell her that International Children’s Book Day is the name of a particular holiday, which means that all four words should be capitalized. You may also need to remind the student that “Children’s” is a possessive noun.

WEEK 2

DAY ONE: Narration and Original Sentence Exercise

Student Pages 9–11

Focus: *Identifying the central theme in a selection and writing original sentences*

Pull out Student Pages 9–10 and 11. Ask the student to write his name and the date on Student Page 11.

Allow the student to read the selection on Student Pages 9–10.

You will now ask the student to summarize the passage. He may glance back at the passage while he is thinking about what to say, but he should not look at it while telling you his summary.

This selection has a strong central theme which the student should identify. To guide him towards this type of summary, say, “The passage talks about a great change. In three or four sentences, describe that change to me.” His answer should resemble one of the following:

“After 1400, people in the Italian cities started to feel differently. They wanted to act for themselves and think their own thoughts, instead of consulting old books. They discovered the ancient world and books written in Latin and Greek. This was called the Renaissance.”

“A new age began. People in Italy became very interested in Greece and Rome. They read books in Latin and Greek and wanted to be like the people of the ancient world. This was called the re-birth, or Renaissance.”

“The Renaissance was different than the Middle Ages. Instead of every man dedicating his life to the service of God, men wanted to think and judge for themselves. Your ability and knowledge became more important than your religion and your profession. People became very interested in the ideas and books of ancient Greece and Rome.”

If the student has difficulty with this summary, ask the following three questions to help focus his thoughts.

Instructor: Where and when did this change begin?

Student: *It began after 1400 in the cities of Italy.*

Instructor: According to the passage, what replaced the goal of dedicating your life to the service and glory of God? What mattered instead?

Student: *Instead, people wanted to use their heads and think and judge for themselves OR decide for themselves how to act and use their own eyes.*

Instructor: What did the Florentines rediscover?

Student: *They rediscovered the books of the ancient Greeks and Romans OR the ideas of the Greeks and Romans.*

Instructor: Why was this time called a “re-birth?”

Student: *Greek and Roman culture were being re-born in Italy.*

Now say to the student, “Give me one sentence that tells me ‘where, when, and what’ about the change: where it happened, when it happened, what it was called.” The student should respond with a sentence resembling one of the following: “After 1400, the Renaissance began in Italy,” or “The change happened in Italy after 1400, and it was called the Renaissance,” or “The rebirth of ancient culture in Italy after 1400 was called the Renaissance.”

Once the student has come up with this sentence, say, “Now give me two or three more sentences with specific details in them about particular changes that happened during the Renaissance.” The purpose of this exercise is to guide the student into stating the central theme of the passage and supporting that theme with specifics.

Write down the student’s narration on the lines below, but do not allow him to watch.

Now ask him whether he can repeat the first sentence (or first and second sentences, depending on length) of the narration to himself. If not, read him the first or first two sentences of the narration only. Tell him to listen carefully, since you will only read once. Encourage him to repeat the sentence or sentences to himself until he can remember, and then to say the words out loud to himself as he writes on Student Page 11.

Give all necessary help in spelling and punctuation.

DAY TWO: Dictation Exercise

Student Page 12

Focus: *Irregular plural nouns*

Pull out Student Page 12. Ask the student to write his name and the date.

Tell the student that the word “renaissance” can refer to other changes, not just the changes in fifteenth-century Italy. Often, a new way of living or thinking in a country, a city, or even a neighborhood is called a “renaissance.” Today’s dictation sentences, from a book called *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* by Lisa Beringer McKissack, describe the Harlem Renaissance, which took place in the African-American neighborhood located in northern Manhattan.

Before dictating, read the following passage to the student:

A renaissance occurs when people begin expressing ideas in new and exciting ways. The New York City community of Harlem experienced a cultural renaissance during the 1920s and 1930s. African-American leaders in arts and literature settled in the community to support and inspire one another, and soon word spread. People from all over the country relocated there to study, work, and play. At night, Harlem was the place to be and to be seen. Cool jazz. Good conversation. New ideas and creativity. All of this was Harlem.

Now dictate the following sentences to the student three times. Before you read, tell the student that you will read the sentences only three times before asking him to write, and will not repeat them afterwards. Indicate the end of the first sentence by allowing your voice to drop.

A renaissance occurs when people begin expressing ideas in new and exciting ways. The New York City community of Harlem experienced a cultural renaissance during the 1920s and 1930s.

Now ask the student to repeat the sentences back to you before he writes. If he forgets, tell him to go back to the beginning of the sentences and recite them again to jog his memory. If necessary, you may then prompt the student with single words.

Watch the student as he writes, and correct him at once if he begins to make a mistake. You may need to tell him that renaissance is *not* capitalized in these sentences because the writer is describing renaissances generally, rather than referring to one particular renaissance. (The word *is* capitalized in the phrase Harlem Renaissance.)

When the student is finished, tell him that there are two different kinds of plurals in these sentences. “Ideas” is a regular plural; to form it, you simply add an “s” to the singular noun “idea.” “People” is an irregular plural. The noun “person” changes its form.

Ask the student what kind of plural the words “1920s and 1930s” are. They may look odd, because they are formed by adding “s” to a number instead of a noun. But both are regular plurals.

DAY THREE: Narration and Original Sentence Exercise

Student Pages 13–15

Focus: *Identifying the central details in a passage and writing original sentences*

Pull out Student Pages 13–14 and 15. Ask the student to write his name and the date on Student Page 15.

Allow the student to read the passage on Student Pages 13–14.

You will now ask the student to summarize the selection. A detail-oriented summary is more appropriate to this passage than a summary telling what happens. To guide the student,

say, "In three or four sentences, tell me about Leonardo da Vinci." His answer should resemble one of the following:

"Leonardo da Vinci wanted to know more about the things he painted. He dissected human bodies and studied the way that birds fly. He observed nature, did experiments, and recorded his findings in his notebooks."

"Leonardo da Vinci was one of the greatest painters in Italy. But he wanted to know more about nature and the way the universe worked. He studied human bodies, plants, animals, and birds. He used his eyes and asked questions. He investigated many things that no one else knew about."

"Leonardo da Vinci tried to look at nature and understand it. He dissected bodies to find out how muscles and bones worked. He studied birds to figure out how they could fly. He observed whirlpools and hot air. He always asked himself questions about what he saw, and wrote the answers in his notebooks."

If the student has trouble choosing important details, ask these four questions:

Painting wasn't enough for Leonardo da Vinci. What did he want?

How did he find out more about people?

How did he find out more about nature?

Where did he record his discoveries?

The answers to these questions will make up the student's summary.

Write down the student's narration on the lines below, but do not allow him to watch.

Now ask him whether he can repeat the first sentence (or first and second sentences, depending on length) of the narration to himself. If not, read him the first or first two sentences of the narration only. Tell him to listen carefully, since you will only read once. Encourage him to repeat the sentence or sentences to himself until he can remember, and then to say the words out loud to himself as he writes on Student Page 15.

Give all necessary help in spelling and punctuation.

DAY FOUR: Dictation Exercise

Student Page 16

Focus: *Nouns*

Pull out Student Page 16. Ask the student to write his name and the date.

Tell the student that today's dictation sentences are from Volume Two of *The Story of the World*, by Susan Wise Bauer. They explain why Leonardo da Vinci thought that he could learn by looking at the world.

Before dictating, read the following passage to the student:

“During the Renaissance, men and women began to believe that they could find out truth by *looking* at the world and figuring out how it worked. After all, they argued, God had created the world. Why couldn't man, who was also created by God, look carefully at this world and understand it? So they *observed* the world: the sky, the earth around them, the people who lived on the earth. They drew conclusions from what they observed.”

Now dictate the following sentences to the student three times. Before you read, tell the student that you will read the sentences only three times before asking him to write, and will not repeat them afterwards. Indicate the commas by pausing; indicate the periods by allowing your voice to drop and pausing for a longer time.

During the Renaissance, men and women began to believe that they could find out truth by looking at the world and figuring out how it worked. After all, they argued, God had created the world.

Now ask the student to repeat the sentences back to you before he writes. If he forgets, tell him to go back to the beginning of the sentences and recite them again to jog his memory. If necessary, you may then prompt the student with single words.

Watch the student as he writes, and correct him at once if he begins to make a mistake. You may need to explain that Renaissance is capitalized because it refers to a particular, specific renaissance: the Italian Renaissance.