

Life of Fred[®]
Dreams

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A Note Before We Begin

This is the fourth book of language arts in the Life of Fred® series. In these language arts books, we will cover English from many angles.

In this book you will learn:

- * when to use scare quotes
- * the use of brackets within quotations
- * when to use an em dash
- * the rule for hard *g* vs. silent *g* for words ending in *-nger*
- * the use of [*sic*] in quotations
- * where you put the question mark(s)
in the double question: Did he ask, "What time is it"

. . . and that's just in the first eight pages of the story!

A NOTE FROM STAN

In these four books of the Life of Fred Language Arts series, you will have learned much more about English than most high school graduates.

✓ For example, many might not recognize the previous sentence as an elliptical construction.

✓ Many might not know which way a double question is punctuated:

Did he ask, "What time is it"?

Did he ask, "What time is it?" or

Did he ask, "What time is it"?

✓ Many could not explain why synecdoche is one form of metonymy.

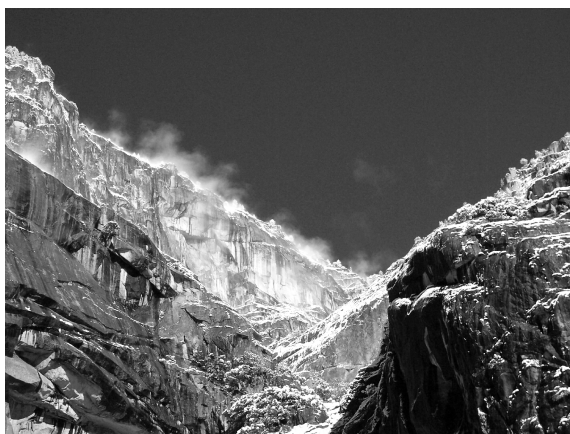
These four books are short. Each contains 19 daily lessons. But each lesson contains so much material that doing these four books once a year during your high school years would be a real good idea. I'll put that in a box.

*Do the 76 daily lessons ($76 = 4 \times 19$) of the four books
once a year
until high school graduation*

In this book, I'll give the three keys to good writing (Chapter 15) and give some hints on how to write an essay (Chapter 16). I'll list the four times when using the passive voice might be preferable (Chapter 11). What is missing is the chance for you to do a lot of writing. You'll do a little writing in Chapter 5 and Chapter 9.

Learning to write, like learning to draw, takes years of practice. Seize opportunities to write real letters rather than texting **How R U?** Write letters to the local newspaper. Write speeches. Join a writers' club. In college I joined the school newspaper.

I took this picture in Yosemite.



It is a picture of your bright future. (← metaphor) Those who have made the effort to learn English (and math) have a great advantage in almost every field of life.

☞ In real estate, writing and reading contracts and figuring interest rates.

☞ In parenting, helping your kids get ahead in their studies.

☞ In working in an office supply store, having the skills that will help you get promoted.

☞ In bull fighting, . . . um . . . maybe not *every* field needs a good command of English and math.

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Chapter One

Misdirected Anger

Fred's adventure had started on Sunday morning. In Sunday school he had learned about the need for teachers in faraway places. During the five minutes of play time, he had written a letter to the Board of Missions. Carrie mailed it.



teach

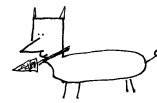


Carrie
Fred's Sunday
school teacher

It was now 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 5. Fred was half way around the world at the home of Bob and Barbara who lived several miles outside of Dubbo, Australia.

Fred had finished a short “career”* as an English teacher at Dubbo School of English. He was now a foster child, and Bob and Barbara were his temporary parents.

“Darn it! [a minced oath]” Bob exclaimed. He noticed that Wolfie had taken one of the trees from the big tree sale of year-old trees that they had just been at. Wolfie dropped the tree at Bob's feet and smiled.



* The word *career* is in scare quotes. Scare quotes are used by writers to indicate that they don't believe what is inside the quotes.

Fred had taught English for less than three hours. It would be hard to call that a career.

Double Time Out!

First time out—

If Barbara had taken a tree without paying for it, that would have been wrong. The Eighth Rule (as Fred had learned in Sunday school) was, "Don't take other people's stuff."

However, dogs and young children don't understand the difference between right and wrong in the same way that nine-year-olds do. That's why you don't see little kids being put in jail.

Second time out—

When Bob said, "Darn it! [a minced oath]" he didn't say "a minced oath." Those are words that I, the author, have added.

When you add words inside of a quotation, you use brackets.

Brackets [and].

Parentheses (and).

Braces { and }.

Personal Note

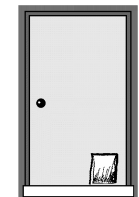
I think braces are the prettiest. You use them in math to contain sets.

A set of pencils {,,}.

Bob wasn't angry at Wolfie as much as he was angry at the commercial that had fooled him.* Sometimes anger gets misdirected.

There's the old story of the owner of a company who received a notice of an Internal Revenue Service audit. He was furious. At work, he yelled at his best salesman, who hadn't done anything wrong. The salesman made his secretary redo a letter four times just to express his bad feelings. She headed out to lunch and screamed at the fast food clerk because she didn't get her food in 40 seconds. The clerk headed home and kicked her dog. The dog wondered why he had been kicked.

Barbara and Bob headed inside (going through the front door). Wolfie and Fred used the doggie door. They were having fun. Fred was thinking of getting a doggie door installed in his office door back at KITTENS University.



small essay

We Pause Now

There are three ways to make a break in a sentence. If you want a tiny break, you use commas. The first sentence in the

*From the previous book, the commercial announced 100 year-old trees that he had misread as 100-year-old trees.

previous paragraph could have been written as, “Barbara and Bob headed inside, going through the front door.”

If you want to slightly emphasize the break, you use parentheses: “Barbara and Bob headed inside (going through the front door.)” I did that originally in order to contrast it with Wolfie and Fred heading through the doggie door.

If you want a sharp, abrupt break, you use an em dash. To type an em dash on a computer, you hold down the alt key and type 0 1 5 1 on the numeric keypad. The em dash is a big-time break. For example: “Bob’s bad mood—Wolfie didn’t like that at all—was soon changed.”

end of small essay

Bob’s original anger at the commercial, which was misdirected at the dog—that’s not quite correct.* His original anger was at himself. *He* had been fooled by the commercial. He realized that even his little foster kid, Fred, knew the difference between a big tree sale and a big-tree sale.

To cover that embarrassment, he directed his rage against the writers of the commercial and against his playful dog, who had been playing “fetch” with a stick that happened to be a little tree.

Bob sat down in his recliner in the living room, turned on a reading light, and opened up his copy of *Ducky Sings Opera*. Last week he had

*Note the use of the dash to indicate a sudden break in the thought.

found that book at a garage sale. He was in no mood to watch more television.

Fred and Wolfie played together on the floor.

Please write your answers down before you read my answers on the next page. You will learn more if you do that.

Your Turn to Play

1. The story of *Ducky Sings Opera* continues.

Find two errors in each paragraph.

When Ducky handed the clerk the half eaten sandwich that had fallen out of Ducky's computer, the clerk laughed and said "I wondered where that sandwich went."

Chewing on the sandwich, the delight of the clerk was evident. He told the duck, "Some people take it for granite that there will always be plenty to eat."

2. Commas, as illustrated here, are one of three ways to make a break in a sentence. What are the other two ways?

3. Let's have a little fun. First, read this sentence aloud. *Without a trace of anger, the finger of the singer lingered near the bell ringer who was the bringer of good news.*

There were lots of *-nger* words in that sentence. Some of those words were pronounced with a **hard g**, namely *anger*, *finger*, and *lingered*. A hard g is the sound *grrr*.

In others (*singer*, *ringer*, *bringer*) the g is silent.

What's the rule? This is a rule you have obeyed over the years without giving it a thought.

..... **ANSWERS**

1. When Ducky handed the clerk the half eaten sandwich that had fallen out of Ducky's computer, the clerk laughed and said "I wondered where that sandwich went."

said, "I
Comma before an
opening quote

half-eaten
Without the hyphen it
would mean half of an
eaten sandwich.

Chewing on the sandwich, the delight of the clerk was evident. He told the duck, "Some people take it for granite that there will always be plenty to eat."

for granted
This is called a
boner—the confusion
of similar words.

the clerk was delighted
A dangling particle. Who was
chewing on the sandwich? It
wasn't the delight.

2. Parentheses (as illustrated here) are a second way to make a break in a sentence.

Dashes—as illustrated here—are a third way.

3. There are two possible rules that I can think of. You may have thought of a third.

#1: If it isn't a word before you add the *-er* (such as *ang*, *fung* or *ling*) then pronounce the hard g.

#2: If it is a verb (such as *sing*, *ring*, or *bring*) before you add the *-er*, then do not pronounce the g.

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