

WRITING WITH SKILL, LEVEL THREE

LEVEL 7 OF THE COMPLETE WRITER

by

Susan Wise Bauer

INSTRUCTOR TEXT

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INTRODUCTION

This is Level Three (the final level) of the *Writing With Skill* series. It assumes that the student and instructor have both worked through the exercises in Levels One and Two. Those exercises lay a vital foundation for the assignments in this text.

Although Level Two contained instructions for working through Level One more quickly with an older student (in preparation for beginning Level Two), neither Level Two nor Level Three of this course should be rushed. The skills taught here will produce a confident, organized writer, but it will take time and practice (and some patience) for these skills to become comfortable for the student.

The directions in this course are targeted at the student. Allow the student to read the instructions and begin to follow them on his or her own before you step in with additional help and guidance. Ultimately, writing is a self-guided activity. This course will continue to develop the student's ability to plan and carry out a piece of writing independently.

Instructions followed by the notation **(Student Responsibility)** are designed to be completed by the student independently, with no help from you. When instructions appear without this notation, the student may need you to help with the assignment or to check his or her work.

However, you should always feel free to ask the student to show his work.

When the student sees the symbol ♦, the student should stop and answer the question asked before going on. Encourage the student to answer the questions out loud, in complete sentences; this forces the student to come up with a specific answer rather than a vague formless idea.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: Train the student to read the instructions thoroughly! Students at this level tend to skim instructions and then tell you that they're confused. Your first step, when the student is puzzled, should always be to say, "Read the instructions out loud to me." Often, you'll find that the student has skipped or misunderstood the directions.

Last year, the student put together a Composition Notebook with five different sections in it:

Outlines

Topoi

Copia

Literary Criticism

Reference

The student may also have preserved the **Narration** section from Level One.

This year, the student will primarily be using the notebook as a reference tool. The student will add a few *topoi* to the Reference section, but the goal of this year's work is to strengthen the student's skills in material that has already been covered.

If the student no longer has last year's notebook, you will need to help the student recreate the following reference materials:

***Topoi* Chart**

- Chronological Narrative of a Past Event
- Chronological Narrative of a Scientific Discovery
- Description of a Place
- Scientific Description
- Description of a Person
- Biographical Sketch
- Sequence: Natural Process
- Sequence: History
- Explanation by Comparison/Contrast
- Explanation by Definition: Natural Object or Phenomenon
- Explanation by Definition: Historical Object, Event, Place, or People Group
- Temporal Comparison: History
- Temporal Comparison: Science

Literary Terms

Sentence Variety Chart

Introductions and Conclusions

Time and Sequence Words

Space and Distance Words/Phrases

Points of View

You have the information contained in these pages in the appendices of this book.

To recreate the *Topoi* chart, have the student copy out the charts in Appendix I, beginning with Chronological Narrative of a Past Event and ending with Temporal Comparison: Science. (Narrative by Significance of a Past Event is the first new *topos* taught in Level Three.)

You may photocopy Appendices II-VI and give them to the student to replace the Literary Terms, Sentence Variety, Introductions and Conclusions, Time & Sequence Words, Space and Distance Words, and Points of View charts.

Rubrics (guides for evaluation) are provided in this level, as in Levels One and Two. In my opinion, asking the student to revise until the work meets your standards is more useful than giving letter or number grades at this level. If the student has not followed instructions, show the student specifically where the composition falls short and ask for revision. Samples of acceptable answers are given in this instructor text when appropriate. These acceptable answers have the minimum level of complexity and information that you should require from the student; if the student wishes to answer with more detail and subtlety, this is (of course) perfectly fine.

Finally, always remember that the program should serve you and the student—not vice versa. You should always feel free to slow down, to speed up, to skip sections, or to adapt instructions. No skill program can anticipate the needs, strengths, and weaknesses of every student. So be careful to customize this program to your student’s needs and abilities.

Overview of the Year’s Sequence

Like Level Two, this book is not divided into separate sections. Instead, the student will alternate compositions in history, science, and literary criticism.

Over the course of this year, the student will build on last year’s skills in outlining, and rewriting, research, and documentation. The student will also continue to work on sentence skills. Level Three reviews the forms mastered over the last two levels of the course, and teaches four more: narrative by significance, explanation by cause and effect, instructional sequence, and experimental sequence.

The primary focus of the course is on building skills in independent composition, so the student will spend much more time researching and writing original compositions, in literature as well as in history and science. The goal of this three-level course is to turn the student into a confident independent writer—so the student is given plenty of opportunity to practice skills on topics of his or her own choice.

Suggested courses to follow Level Three are found in the Afterword.