

# Getting Started with Teaching Writing: Structure and Style



INSTITUTE FOR  
**Excellence in Writing**  
An effective method for teaching writing skills

Thank you for purchasing our teacher’s course. In addition to this Seminar Workbook, the course includes a set of 10 DVDs containing:

- Teaching Writing: Structure and Style (numbered 1–6)
- Tips and Tricks
- Student Workshops
  - Elementary Level (Grades 2–4)
  - Intermediate (Grades 5–7)
  - High School (Grades 8–10+)

To help you organize your workbook, insert the dividers at the beginning of each section. For your convenience, the page numbers for each of those sections is listed at right.

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Many teachers like to take time over the summer to prepare for teaching writing in the fall. This is beneficial as it helps the teacher see the entire scope of the program before working through its parts. However, if you are unable to complete the entire course before beginning the school year, you can simply complete the viewing unit by unit as you progress through the school year.

Below are viewing directions to complete the seminar in nine sessions. To the right of the viewing schedule is the list of practicum exercises which will help you better understand the writing process before teaching it yourself. Completing the practicum assignments is part of the optional IEW teacher accreditation process. Go to [excellenceinwriting.com/ic](http://excellenceinwriting.com/ic).

Be sure to watch the DVDs in order. Each unit builds on the one before. Thus, the units must be presented in order for the program to be successfully implemented. The nine units outlined below can be viewed one at a time in nine sessions. If you plan a total of two hours per session, you will have plenty of time to both view the DVD and complete the teacher practicum assignment.

In addition to the teacher training, the program includes three student workshops to show you how the program works in the classroom. The elementary workshop is suitable for grades 2–4, the intermediate for grades 5–7, and the high school level for grades 8–10 or beyond. These workshops are similar to the first disc of each of the Student Writing Intensives. The handouts which accompany the student workshops are located just before the index at the back of this workbook.

For additional help using our materials, check out our support groups at [excellenceinwriting.com/loopause](http://excellenceinwriting.com/loopause).

## Teaching Writing: Structure and Style Viewing Suggestions

Session	Description and Viewing	Practicum Exercises <i>Required for Accreditation</i>
1	<p><b>Unit 1: Note Making and Outlines</b> (pages 1–8) Watch the first portion of Disc 1 (62 minutes). You may stop when Andrew says, “That is what Unit 1 is all about,” or continue on to Unit 2.</p> <p><b>Unit 2: Summarizing from Notes</b> (pages 9–14) Continue watching the remainder of Disc 1. Go to “Scene Selection,” and select “Unit II: Summarizing from Notes.” Watch to the end of the disc (35 minutes).</p>	Practice telling back the “Booklice” paragraph from your outline to a partner.
2	<p><b>Syllabus in Style: Dress-Ups</b> (pages 15–26) Since the dress-ups are also introduced in Unit 2, watch Disc 2 from the beginning to the “Pause for Practicum” (59 minutes). Complete the practicum.</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Watch the first 30 minutes, and stop when Unit 3 is discussed.</p>	Copy the “Booklice” paragraph created by the class (page 16).  Practicum: Note Making and Summarizing (page 24)

3	<p><b>Unit 3: Summarizing Narrative Stories</b> (pages 27–36, A-1, A-3) Watch Disc 2 starting at “Observation from Practicum” to the end of the disc (58 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> There is no scene title for Unit 3 on the “Tips and Tricks” DVD; however, the Unit 3 discussion starts at about 28 minutes into the DVD (25 minutes).</p>	<p>Fill in the “Fox and Crow” outline on page 28.</p> <p>Practicum: Summarizing a Narrative Story “The Bat and the Nightingale” (page 32)</p>
4	<p><b>Syllabus in Style: Sentence Openers</b> (pages 17–20) Watch Disc 3 from the beginning through the sentence opener summary (25 minutes).</p> <p><b>Unit 4: Summarizing a Reference</b> (pages 37–46) Finish watching Disc 3 starting at “Unit IV: Summarizing a Reference” (52 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at the “Unit 4” scene, and watch until Unit 5 is introduced (12 minutes).</p>	<p>Copy the outline for “Kinds of Elephants” and the composition created by the class on the DVD (page 38).</p>
5	<p><b>Syllabus in Style: Teeter-Totters, Noun Clause</b> (page 18) Watch Disc 4 from the beginning until Unit 5 is presented (15 minutes).</p> <p><b>Unit 5: Writing from Pictures</b> (pages 47–52) Continue watching Disc 4 through the pause for practicum up to the introduction of more advanced decorations. (42 minutes).</p> <p><b>Syllabus in Style: Decorations &amp; Triple Extensions</b> (page 22) Continue watching Disc 4 from the pause for practicum to the end of the disc (24 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at “Unit 5,” and watch for about 7 minutes.</p>	<p>Copy the “Chick and Hose” outline created on the DVD (page 48).</p> <p>Practicum: Writing a Story from Pictures (Outline “Kitchen Story” only, page 51)</p>
6	<p><b>Unit 6: Library Research Reports</b> (pages 38–46) Watch the first half of Disc 5 starting at the beginning. Watch to the “Pause for Practicum,” complete the practicum, and continue until Unit 7 is introduced (52 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at Unit 6 on the Tips DVD (23 minutes).</p>	<p>Practicum: Summarizing Multiple References (pages 45–46: Write one paragraph using the checklist.)</p> <p><i>The elephant mini-books are located in the back pocket of the Seminar Workbook. If they are missing, you can download a set at <a href="http://excellenceinwriting.com/free-downloads">excellenceinwriting.com/free-downloads</a>.</i></p>
7	<p><b>Unit 7: Creative Writing and Basic Essay</b> (pages 53–58) Watch the second half of Disc 5 starting at “Unit VII” and to the end of the disc (50 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at Unit 7 (about 10 minutes).</p>	<p>Practicum: Outline for Unit 7 (Choose a topic on page 54, and create an outline using the model on page 55.)</p>
8	<p><b>Unit 8: Essay Writing</b> (pages 59–66) Watch Disc 6 from the beginning through the summary of essays (64 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at Units 8 and 9 (about 15 minutes).</p>	<p>Using the Super-Essay Outline on page 65, on a new page recreate an abbreviated (topics only) 17-paragraph key word outline for the super-essay.</p>
9	<p><b>Unit 9: Critiques</b> (pages 67–71) Watch the second part of Disc 6 starting at “Unit IX: Critiques,” and watch to the end of the disc (50 minutes).</p> <p><b>Tips and Tricks DVD</b> Start at Unit 8 and 9 on the Tips DVD, scan forward to about 1:59:30, and watch for about 2 minutes.</p>	<p>Practicum: Using the “Bat and Nightingale” key word outline created on page 33, create a key word outline of an introduction and conclusion to turn the story outline into a critique outline.</p>

## TWSS Student Workshop and TIPS Scene Titles and Times

<b>Elementary (Grades 2-4) Student Workshop Times</b>	
00:00	Introduction
2:39	“The Tortoise and the Hare”
5:00	Sentence 1-6
18:49	Sentence 7 Keywords – Choose Your Own
21:21	Testing the Keyword Outline
27:32	Writing Style
37:47	“ly” words
46:02	Banned Word: Said
56:19	Starting the Composition
58:56	No Erasing
1:03:01	Changing the Story
1:07:48	Preparing to Write
1:12:04	Do the Assignment and Checklist
1:14:29	Creating the Title
1:18:54	Reading the Student Compositions
1:31:44	Summary
1:32:46	End

<b>Advanced (Grades 8-10+) Student Workshop Times</b>	
00:00	Introduction
2:10	“Effect of Music on Plants”
3:36	Key Word Outline
9:06	Key Word Outline continued
15:48	Testing the Outline
21:12	Note Taking from Lecture
27:22	Lecture: “Music & Rats
37:28	How To Study Effectively
47:53	Tell Back Practice
51:25	Sentence Openers
54:57	Sentence Openers: Subject
57:22	Sentence Openers: Prepositional
1:03:40	Sentence Openers: “ly”
1:10:39	Sentence Openers: Clausal
1:18:25	Sentence Openers: VSS
1:22:45	Writing Assignment Instructions
1:30:04	Finishing Writing Assignment
1:40:18	Reading Student Samples
1:45:05	Conclusion
1:45:30	End

<b>Intermediate (Grades 5-7) Student Workshop Times</b>	
00:00	Introduction
2:21	“Vulture Bees” – Keyword Outline
4:17	Sentence 1 Keywords
6:35	Sentence 2-6 Keywords
12:14	Sentence 7 Keywords
13:34	Testing the “Vulture Bees” Outline
17:16	“Dance Flies” Keyword Outline
23:33	Testing the “Dance Flies: Keyword Outline
27:47	Style Checklist
38:18	Style Technique – “ly” words
48:06	Style Technique – which clause
57:06	Style Technique – strong verb
1:03:06	“strong verb” continued
1:09:45	Style Technique – “because”
1:10:56	No Erasing Rule
1:17:30	Preparing to Write
1:24:09	Writing Your Composition
1:26:24	Choosing a Title
1:35:56	Reading Student Samples
1:41:22	Conclusion
1:42:03	End

<b>Tips and Tricks Times</b>	
<i>Note: There are no chapter marks for the titles in parenthesis. The times are included for your convenience to aid in scanning.</i>	
00:00	Introduction
11:04	Units 1, 2, & 3
26:25	(Unit 1, 2)
28:24	(Unit 3)
53:20	Unit 4
1:05:31	Unit 5
1:12:32	Unit 6
1:35:08	Unit 7
1:44:48	Units 8 & 9
02:02:02	Stylistic Techniques
02:20:44	End of Disc

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# OVERVIEW

*Teaching Writing: Structure & Style* is a complete syllabus for teaching writing skills to children in grades two through ten.

Comprehensive systems for teaching writing skills are rare. Clearly, no single program will ever incorporate everything there is to learn about writing. This syllabus, however, when followed consistently, will prepare elementary-age students with writing skills far above their peers. It provides a solid foundation for exceptional performance in high school and university. Equally as significant, this syllabus offers a way to assist teachers in developing competency, independence, and creativity in their students, all within a system that provides for concrete evaluation and measurable achievement. The challenge of “word-smithing” according to a concrete set of expectations becomes a game that children enjoy. As their enjoyment of writing increases, so do their skills.

The **structure** portion of the syllabus is divided into **nine units**, which may roughly correspond with the nine months of the school year; however, it should be stressed that the pace of teaching must be adjusted to meet the age, ability and interests of the children. A teacher may begin with Unit One and proceed through the units as the months unfold or go directly to the unit of interest or need. Each year, the units may be taught again, but with more advanced source materials and with an increased expectation in sophistication and quality of output. The various structures are reinforced yearly and thus firmly internalized by the children. A sample year’s schedule is included in the Appendix on page A-18.

The syllabus of **style** is taught **throughout the units** at the speed with which the students can understand and utilize it. Techniques are introduced one at a time. Only some students will master everything taught, but all students will master some of what is taught. While advanced style techniques will keep the brightest students excited about their writing, the basics of the syllabus allow all students to achieve variety and competence in expression. The syllabus in style provides valuable communication tools which will serve them always.

Below are some of the basic philosophic tenets of the Blended Sound-Sight Written Communication Pathway.

1. When children are given structural guidelines and specific requirements, they are more able to develop competency, independence and, as a result, creativity.
2. The teacher should introduce one concept at a time, model it extensively, and give numerous examples before requiring independence.
3. As students become competent at applying one concept, the teacher may introduce another but should continue to require that each student use, in every composition, every technique learned so far.
4. For a high level of ability to develop, **students must practice writing daily**. Shorter assignments given more frequently allow for faster progress through the syllabus.

Structure is rigid; style is fluid. Style is a “sprinkling system” to help bring writing to life. It allows for creative experimentation; structure develops organizational skills. In the process of mastering the guidelines and requirements of this syllabus, students will acquire writing skills to last a lifetime.

## On teaching mixed groups...

This approach to composition instruction is ideal for teaching groups of children with mixed ages or abilities. In truth, even a class of twenty-five nine-year-old children will show a wide variety of existing skills and inherent aptitudes. The teaching method used with this writing syllabus allows the instructor to teach and model a concept until the most advanced students are able to grasp the idea fully and apply it independently.

While the first group is working on their own, the teacher can teach and model the process again for the other students. As the next level of students becomes independent, the teacher can continue to model for the slowest students while individually checking and customizing assignments for the top group. This sequence applies both for a class of twenty-five third graders and in a home school of two or three. Once the concept has been practiced sufficiently for all to understand and apply the basic ideas, the group can come together again for the presentation of the next concept.

## What this is not...

This workbook is not meant as a stand-alone text. It is a companion to the live or DVD presentation of a two-day seminar and practicum. It can also be used as an introduction and supplement to Dr. Webster's text, *Blended Structure & Style in Composition*, a lengthy book which contains a wealth of further explanations and examples.

Some skills are not addressed herein. Spelling, handwriting, and formal grammar are subjects of importance to good writing. They must also be taught. The distinctions of informative, persuasive, and narrative writing are not mentioned in detail in this syllabus. Having the skills to express ideas in writing are foundational; therefore we are primarily concerned with teaching structure and style rather than content. Once basic skills are learned, any type of writing becomes easier and more effective.

Although this workbook (together with the seminar) does present a complete syllabus, it is also designed to supplement other methods of teaching writing which may be currently used. What we present herein can be used, either in full or in part, to improve one's own writing skills and understanding of style. Although we believe teachers will obtain the best results when they implement this program with consistency over time, it is also possible to use just one idea and see immediate improvement.

There are no student worksheets or exercises in this program since the source text for writing practice comes from the content areas of study. This is truly "writing across the curriculum." This program presents the teaching of writing in the classical sense, full of modeling, examples, techniques, and requirements. The checklist-based grading approach makes it possible for every student to be successful and show visible and significant improvements.

# THE STRUCTURAL MODELS

## **Essay Writing**

(Combine with Science, History, etc.)

## **Creative Writing**

(Combine with Reading, Literature, etc.)

### **1. Note Making & Outlines**

(Key words from each sentence)

### **2. Summarizing from Notes**

(Key words from each sentence)

### **3. Summarizing Narrative Stories**

(Key words from answers to story sequence chart questions)

### **4. Summarizing a Reference**

(Key words from facts from one source: limit; choose interesting/important)

### **6. Library Research Reports**

(Key words from facts from multiple sources: limit; choose interesting/important; fuse)

### **8. Formal Essay**

(Unit 4/6 model with Introduction & Conclusion)

**Persuasive Essay**

### **5. Writing from Pictures**

(Key words from answers to questions about pictures)

### **7. Creative Writing with Structure**

(Key words from answers to questions; “notes from brain”)

### **9. Formal Critique**

(Unit 3 model with Introduction & Conclusion)

# STYLISTIC TECHNIQUES

## Dress-Ups

1. **who-which** clause
2. “**ly**”
3. **because** clause
4. strong verb
5. quality adjectives
6. **when, while, where, as, since, if, although** clause

Advanced: dual adverbs, verbs, and adjectives; noun clause; adverbial or adjectival “teeter-totters”

Minimum Rule: Each one in every paragraph

Indicator: underline (only six)

## Sentence Openers

- ① subject
  - ② prepositional
  - ③ “ly” word
  - ④ “ing”,
  - ⑤ clausal,
  - ⑥ vss (2–5 words)
- Advanced:
- ⑦ “ed”

Minimum Rule: Each one in every paragraph as possible; no more than two of the same in a row.

Indicator: Number in margin (every sentence)

## Decorations

1. question
2. conversation
3. 3sss
4. dramatic opening-closing
5. simile or metaphor
6. alliteration

Minimum Rule: One different decoration per paragraph, four per story

Indicator: Dotted underline or “dec.” in margin

## Sentence Styles (Triple Extensions)

1. word repetition
2. phrase & clausal repetition
3. repeating “ings,” consecutive or spaced
4. repeating “lys,” consecutive or spaced
5. repeating adjectives or nouns
6. repeating verbs, consecutive or spaced

Minimum Rule: One different style per paragraph

Indicator: The word “triple” in margin