

THE COMPLETE WRITER

Level Three Workbook for Writing with Ease

STUDENT PAGES

By
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“The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean”

by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

This story is a very old fairy tale, written down almost two hundred years ago by two brothers named Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm who wanted to collect ancient stories and keep them alive.

In a village there lived a poor old woman, who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and so that it might burn the quicker, she added a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two.

Then the straw said, “Friends, where do you come from, and how did you get here?”

The coal replied, “I sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by sheer force, my death would have been certain. I would have been burnt to ashes.”

The bean said: “I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I would have been made into soup without any mercy, like all of the others.”

“Nothing good would have happened to me either!” said the straw. “The old woman has destroyed all my brothers in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers.”

“But what are we to do now?” said the coal.

“I think,” answered the bean, “that since we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and go on a journey to a foreign country.”

The coal and the straw agreed, and the three set out on their way together. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge, they did not know how they were to get over it.

The straw said: “I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over on me as on a bridge.” So the straw stretched itself from one bank to the other, and the coal tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was afraid. She stood still, and did not dare go any farther. The straw began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last.

The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event. She was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst.

It would have been all over with the bean, but by good fortune a tailor, who was travelling in search of work, sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a kind heart, he pulled out his needle and thread, and sewed her together.

The bean thanked him most prettily. And, because the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

—Trans. Edgar Taylor and Marian Edwardes, 1823;
some archaic language has been clarified by Susan Wise Bauer

Date _____

Week 1
Day Two

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

“Cat and Mouse in Partnership”

by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

A cat became friends with a mouse, and the two decided to keep house together.

“We must store up some food for winter,” said the cat. The mouse agreed, and together the two bought a little pot of bacon fat. But they did not know where to put it.

Finally, after much thought, the cat said, “We should store it in the church, for no one dares steal anything from there. We will set it beneath the altar, and not touch it until we are really in need of it.”

So the pot was placed in safety. But it was not long before the cat had a great yearning for it, and said to the mouse: “My cousin has brought a little son into the world. He is white with brown spots, and I must go to the christening.”

“Yes, yes,” answered the mouse, “by all means go.”

But the cat had no cousin. She went straight to the church, stole to the pot, and licked the top of the fat off. Then she took a walk upon the roofs of the town and stretched herself in the sun, and not until it was evening did she return home.

“Well, here you are again,” said the mouse. “What name did they give the child?”

“Top-off,” said the cat quite coolly.

“Top-off!” cried the mouse, “that is a very odd and uncommon name.”

“It is no worse than Crumb-stealer,” said the cat, “which is the name of your own little nephew.”

Before long the cat was seized by another fit of yearning. She said to the mouse: “You must do me a favour, and once more manage the house for a day alone. Another cousin of mine has had a child.”

The good mouse consented, but the cat crept behind the town walls to the church, and devoured half the pot of fat.

When she went home the mouse inquired, “And what was the child named?”

“Half-done,” answered the cat.

“Half-done!” said the mouse. “I’ve never heard such a name in my life!”

The cat’s mouth soon began to water for some more of the fat. “All good things go in threes,” said she. “My third cousin has had a child—a beautiful black kitten with white paws. You will let me go to the christening, won’t you?”

This time, the cat entirely emptied the pot of fat. When she returned home at night, the mouse at once asked what name had been given to the third child.

“It will not please you more than the others,” said the cat. “He is called All-gone.”

“All-gone!” cried the mouse, “that is the strangest name of all!”

After this, no one invited the cat to christenings, but when the winter had come and there was no longer anything to be found outside, the mouse thought of their provision, and said: “Come, cat, we will go and eat our pot of fat—we shall enjoy that.”

“Yes,” answered the cat, “just as much as sticking our tongues out the window.”

They set out on their way. When they arrived, the pot of fat was still in its place, but it was empty.

“Alas!” said the mouse. “Now I see what has happened! You have eaten it all while you were pretending to see your nephews named! First top-off, then half-done, then—”

“One more word,” cried the cat, “and I will eat you too!”

But “All-gone” was already on the mouse’s lips. She had barely spoken it when the cat sprang on her, seized her, and swallowed her down. In truth, that is the way of the world!

— Trans. Edgar Taylor and Marian Edwardes, 1823;
some archaic language has been clarified by Susan Wise Bauer

Date _____

Week 1
Day Four

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

From *Mr. Revere and I*

by Robert Lawson

Mr. Revere and I is a story about the American revolution—told by Paul Revere's horse, *Scheherazade!* In the first chapter, we learn that *Scheherazade* used to be a horse in the British cavalry (mounted soldiers). When British soldiers were sent to the colonies to fight against the American Revolution, *Scheherazade* and her rider were sent "to occupy the Port of Boston in the Massachusetts Colony" and to help put down the rebellion.

Scheherazade's rider belonged to a group of soldiers known as the 14th Regiment. All of the horses in the 14th Regiment were put on a ship and sent from England to America. This is *Scheherazade's* account of her journey.

Ajax is another horse, a "magnificent charger." The "artillery horses" were horses that belonged to another military division which was also being sent to America. A "transport" is a ship designed especially to move men and horses from one place to another; a "ship of the line" is a warship with cannons on both sides. To "pipe-clay" a belt meant to clean it with a very fine, white clay that removed dirt and stains from the leather. "Gaols" is an old-fashioned way to spell "jails." An "Accoutrement" is part of a military uniform that isn't a weapon—like a belt, or a bag for carrying food.

I will not dwell long on the horrors of that trip. It was my first sea voyage, but *Ajax*, who had made several, said he had seen worse. What *they* could have been like I cannot imagine, for it is hard to conceive of any voyage being worse than ours.

We were quartered in the hold of an extremely old and leaky vessel misnamed the *Glorious*. There was no light and less air. Our hay was moldy, the grain mildewed and weevily, the water unspeakable. Rats were everywhere; they ate the food from under our very noses, they nibbled at our hoofs, they made sleep impossible. Our stalls were never cleaned, and of course currying and brushing were unheard-of.

Our grooms occupied the deck above us and a worse lot could scarce be imagined. They had been plucked from the gaols and prisons to fill out our ranks and fought and caroused unceasingly. *Ajax* and I were fortunate, for the thug assigned to us had been in prison for horse stealing, so at least he knew *something* of horses, and we fared a bit better than our less lucky companions.

How we envied the artillery horses who were stabled on the open deck of another transport, the *Unfathomable!* Of course they were exposed to the weather, and three were swept overboard in a storm; but I think I envied those three most of all.

From the conversation of the so-called grooms, we learned the make-up of the rest of the expedition. There were four transports for the troops, whose condition was not much better than ours, except that they were given rum three times a day and were allowed to go on deck now and then, weather permitting. They had to be closely watched, however, for many had shown a most unpatriotic tendency to jump overboard. A very fine ship, the *Thunderous*, was given over entirely to the Officers and their servants; and of course we had an escort of four great ships of the line: the *Implacable*, the *Incapable*, the *Impossible* and the *Implausible*.

Our passage consumed only a little more than one month—remarkably fast, Ajax said, but to me it seemed an endless horror. Had I been capable of any feeling at all I should have rejoiced when, on the last day of September, 1768, the everlasting motion stopped and the roaring of the anchor chains shuddered through the ship. As it was, I was too sick and weary to care. I could not be interested when the grooms stumbled below to throw us our horrid evening meal.

We were anchored in Boston Harbor, I gathered. Tomorrow we would land. All troops to be clean-shaven, belts pipe-clayed, arms and accoutrements polished, uniforms pressed, hair powdered....

There was no mention of us horses.

Date _____

Week 2
Day One

Name _____

Narration Exercise

From *Mr. Revere and I* by Robert Lawson

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line. This section contains the first set of lines for the student's response.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line. This section contains the second set of lines for the student's response.

Date _____

Week 2
Day Two

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

From *Mr. Revere and I*

by Robert Lawson

After Scheherazade comes to Boston, the soldier who owns her loses her in a game of dice to the owner of a glue factory, a man named Nat Sime. The white glue you use for projects is made from special chemicals that dry when they are squeezed out into the open air. But in those days, glue was made in factories that boiled up animal hides, bones, and joints. The hides and bones have a sticky protein in them that acts just like your glue does today.

Scheherazade isn't made into glue—but she is forced to pull a cart that collects the hides and bones. In the mornings, she is driven down the fish market to collect fish heads, skins, and bones. This passage describes the rest of her daily routine. Hezekiah is the man who takes care of Scheherazade; Mildred is another horse in the 14th Regiment, and Scheherazade does not like Mildred at all.

There are some unfamiliar words in the story. "Gurry" is an old word for fishheads and bones, all piled together. The "van" of an army division is the group of soldiers right at the front of the division, leading the way. A "wain" is a large farm wagon.

In the afternoon we drove to the slaughterhouse, whence we fetched an equally offensive load of hoofs and horns. Then, apparently, my duties for the day were done. I was fed, rather poorly watered and bedded down for the night. This was to be my daily routine for many months.

While the work was not unduly hard the humiliation was almost too dreadful to bear. In the first place, for a horse of my background and attainments to be put in harness at all was unthinkable. Had I my old strength and spirits, I would have kicked cart and harness to bits before submitting to such an indignity. Then to be hitched to a *cart*, and *such* a cart—its unsavory loads the butt of jeers and insults whenever it appeared on the streets!

Also there was my appearance, which grew steadily more pitiful. Nat Sime was not one to waste money on fancy feed, so mine was both atrocious and scanty. I was always half shod, my coat grew long and matted. Hezekiah, although kindly enough, knew nothing of the care of horses. My stable was seldom cleaned; often he forgot to water me or give me bedding. I developed two collar sores which he did not know how to treat. They became more painful and hideous daily.

Worst of all was the constant dread that someday I would come face to face with my old Regiment. Changed though my appearance was, every horse would surely recognize me, and that would be the last straw; the very thought of it chilled me. I could picture the dismay of Ajax and the sneers of that nasty little

Mildred. I resolved firmly that rather than undergo that ordeal I would first drown myself in the Harbor.

Of course in a town as small as Boston it was inevitable that someday I must encounter my old comrades in arms and one morning the very thing that I had been so dreading came to pass.

We were toiling up Milk Street from the wharfs with our usual load of gurry when I suddenly became aware of the familiar rattle of drums and the squealing of fifes. Raising my drooping head I beheld the proud van of the glorious 14th advancing down the hill in all its majesty. The morning sun winked and glittered on bayonet and buckle, the scarlet coats glowed hotly, the white-gaitered legs rose and fell rhythmically....

For the first time in my life I ran away.

Wheeling sharply I plunged into the first side street, my one thought to regain the docks and hurl myself into the Harbor waters. I did not get very far.

The street was a narrow one and almost blocked by a huge wain toiling up the hill. Cart and wagon locked wheels, then with a great crash the cart, I, Hezekiah and our horrid load piled up in a tangled mass on the sidewalk.

The crash turns out to be a good thing for Scheherazade—she is rescued from the glue factory by the colonial leader Sam Adams, who gives her to Paul Revere so that he can learn how to ride. That's only the beginning of Scheherazade's adventures.

Date _____

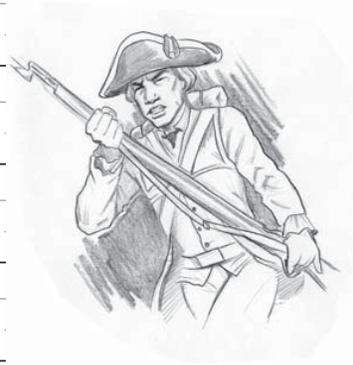
Week 2
Day Three

Name _____

Narration/Dictation Exercise

From *Mr. Revere and I* by Robert Lawson

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line. This section contains the first set of lines for the exercise.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed midline, and a solid bottom line. This section contains the remaining sets of lines for the exercise.

Date _____

Week 2
Day Four

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated 15 times.