

# THE COMPLETE WRITER

## Level Four Workbook for Writing with Ease

STUDENT PAGES

By

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**Peace Hill Press**

18021 The Glebe Lane  
Charles City, VA 23030  
[www.peacehillpress.com](http://www.peacehillpress.com)

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## “The Emperor’s New Clothes”

by Hans Christian Andersen

*This is slightly condensed (shortened) from the version written by Hans Christian Andersen, a Danish fairy-tale writer who lived 1805-1875. You probably know this story already, but pay close attention; you will need to remember only the details found in this particular telling of the tale.*

Many years ago, there was an Emperor, who was so excessively fond of new clothes, that he spent all his money in dress. He had a different suit for each hour of the day; and as of any other king or emperor, one is accustomed to say, “he is sitting in council,” it was always said of him, “The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe.”

One day, two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to weave stuffs of the most beautiful colors and elaborate patterns, the clothes manufactured from which should have the wonderful property of remaining invisible to everyone who was unfit for the office he held, or who was extraordinarily simple in character.

“These must, indeed, be splendid clothes!” thought the Emperor. “Had I such a suit, I might at once find out what men in my realms are unfit for their office, and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately.” And he caused large sums of money to be given to both the weavers in order that they might begin their work directly.

So the two pretended weavers set up two looms, and affected to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread; put both into their own knapsacks; and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.

The whole city was talking of the splendid cloth which the Emperor had ordered to be woven at his own expense. And now the Emperor himself wished to see the costly manufacture, while it was still in the loom. Accompanied by a select number of officers of the court, he went to the crafty impostors, who, as soon as they were aware of the Emperor’s approach, went on working more diligently than ever; although they still did not pass a single thread through the looms.

“How is this?” said the Emperor to himself. “I can see nothing! This is indeed a terrible affair! Am I a simpleton, or am I unfit to be an Emperor? That would be the worst thing that could happen—Oh! the cloth is charming,” said he, aloud. And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms; for on no account would he say that he could not see. All his retinue now strained their eyes, hoping to discover something on the looms, but they could see no more

than the others; nevertheless, they all exclaimed, "Oh, how beautiful!" and advised his majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material, for the approaching procession.

The rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and had sixteen lights burning, so that everyone might see how anxious they were to finish the Emperor's new suit. They pretended to roll the cloth off the looms; cut the air with their scissors; and sewed with needles without any thread in them. "See!" cried they, at last. "The Emperor's new clothes are ready!"

And now the Emperor, with all the grandees of his court, came to the weavers; and the rogues raised their arms, as if in the act of holding something up, saying, "Here are your Majesty's trousers! Here is the scarf! Here is the mantle! The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; one might fancy one has nothing at all on, when dressed in it; that, however, is the great virtue of this delicate cloth."

"Yes indeed!" said all the courtiers, although not one of them could see anything of this exquisite manufacture.

"If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to take off your clothes, we will fit on the new suit, in front of the looking glass."

The Emperor was accordingly undressed, and the rogues pretended to array him in his new suit; the Emperor turning round, from side to side, before the looking glass. The lords of the bedchamber, who were to carry his Majesty's train felt about on the ground, as if they were lifting up the ends of the mantle; and pretended to be carrying something; for they would by no means betray anything like simplicity, or unfitness for their office.

So now the Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out, "Oh! How beautiful are our Emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle; and how gracefully the scarf hangs!" In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes; because, in doing so, he would have declared himself either a simpleton or unfit for his office.

"But the Emperor has nothing at all on!" said a little child.

"Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

"But he has nothing at all on!" at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now!





**“The Leap-Frog”**  
by Hans Christian Andersen

*This is another of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales. This story is more difficult than the story of The Emperor’s New Clothes, so you may want to read it more than once before you try to summarize it.*

A Flea, a Grasshopper, and a Leap-frog once wanted to see which could jump highest; and they invited the whole world, and everybody else besides who chose to come to see the festival. Three famous jumpers were they, as everyone would say, when they all met together in the room.

“I will give my daughter to him who jumps highest,” exclaimed the King; “for it is not so amusing where there is no prize to jump for.”

The Flea was the first to step forward. He had exquisite manners, and bowed to the company on all sides; for he had noble blood, and was, moreover, accustomed to the society of man alone; and that makes a great difference.

Then came the Grasshopper. He was considerably heavier, but he was well-mannered, and wore a green uniform, which he had by right of birth; he said, moreover, that he belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family, and that in the house where he then was, he was thought much of. The fact was, he had been just brought out of the fields, and put in a pasteboard house, three stories high, all made of cards with the colored side inwards; and doors and windows cut out of the body of the Queen of Hearts. “I sing so well,” said he, “that sixteen native grasshoppers who have chirped from infancy, and yet got no house built of cards to live in, grew thinner than they were before for sheer vexation when they heard me.”

It was thus that the Flea and the Grasshopper gave an account of themselves, and thought they were quite good enough to marry a Princess.

The Leap-frog said nothing; but people gave it as their opinion, that he therefore thought the more; and when the house-dog snuffed at him with his nose, he confessed the Leap-frog was of good family. The old councillor, who had had three orders given him to make him hold his tongue, asserted that the Leap-frog was a prophet; for that one could see on his back, if there would be a severe or mild winter, and that was what one could not see even on the back of the man who writes the almanac.

“I say nothing, it is true,” exclaimed the King; “but I have my own opinion, notwithstanding.”

Now the trial was to take place. The Flea jumped so high that nobody could see where he went to; so they all asserted he had not jumped at all; and that was dishonorable.

The Grasshopper jumped only half as high; but he leaped into the King's face, who said that was ill-mannered.

The Leap-frog stood still for a long time lost in thought; it was believed at last he would not jump at all.

"I only hope he is not unwell," said the house-dog; when, pop! he made a jump all on one side into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a little golden stool close by.

Hereupon the King said, "There is nothing above my daughter; therefore to bound up to her is the highest jump that can be made; but for this, one must possess understanding, and the Leap-frog has shown that he has understanding. He is brave and intellectual."

And so he won the Princess.

"It's all the same to me," said the Flea. "She may have the old Leap-frog, for all I care. I jumped the highest; but in this world merit seldom meets its reward. A fine exterior is what people look at now-a-days." The Flea then went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

The Grasshopper sat without on a green bank, and reflected on worldly things; and he said too, "Yes, a fine exterior is everything—a fine exterior is what people care about." And then he began chirping his peculiar melancholy song, from which we have taken this history; and which may, very possibly, be all untrue, although it does stand here printed in black and white.





## From *A Little History of the World*

by E. H. Gombrich, trans. Caroline Mustill

*E. H. Gombrich wrote a one-volume history of the world in 1935. He wrote it in German, his native language. He wrote many more books, all in English, but his history of the world was still only available in German. An English translation of the book was not published until 2005, several years after Gombrich died.*

*“Burgher” is the name for a medieval man who was well-off and who could be elected to leadership in his town or city. Themistocles was an Athenian general who lived in the fifth century B.C.; Barbarossa was Holy Roman Emperor in the twelfth century.*

Have you ever come across an old school exercise book, or something else you once wrote and, on leafing through it, been amazed at how much you have changed in such a short time? Amazed by your mistakes, but also by the good things you had written? Yet at the time you hadn't noticed that you were changing. Well, the history of the world is just the same.

How nice it would be if, suddenly, heralds were to ride through the streets crying: “Attention please! A new age is beginning!” But things aren't like that: people change their opinions without even noticing. And then all of a sudden they become aware of it, as you do when you look at your old school books. Then they announce with pride: “We are in the new age.” And they often add: “People used to be so stupid!”

Something of the sort happened after 1400 in the cities of Italy. Especially in the large and prosperous cities of central Italy, and in Florence in particular. They had guilds there too, and had built a great cathedral. But Florence had none of the noble knights that were to be found in France and Germany. For a long time Florentine burghers had ignored the commands of their German emperors, and by now they were as free and independent as the citizens of ancient Athens. And as the years went by these free and prosperous burghers, shopkeepers and craftsmen had come to care about entirely different things from those that had mattered to the knights and craftsmen of the Middle Ages.

To be a warrior or a craftsman and dedicate one's life to the service and glory of God was no longer every man's aim. What mattered was to be someone in your own right, to have a head on your shoulders and know how to use it. To think and judge for yourself. To act on your own authority, without the need to consult others. And, rather than resorting to old books to find out how things were done in the past, to use your own eyes and act accordingly. That's what it really came down to: using your eyes and acting accordingly. Independence, ability, intellect,

knowledge and skill were what counted. People no longer asked first about your rank, your profession, your religion or what country you came from. They said: tell us what you can do.

And suddenly, in about 1420, the Florentines noticed that they were no longer the people they had been in the Middle Ages. They had different concerns. They found different things beautiful. To them the old cathedrals and paintings seemed gloomy and rigid, the old traditions irksome. And, in their search for something more to their liking, something free, independent and unconstrained, they discovered antiquity. And I mean literally discovered. It mattered little to them that the people of those times had been heathens. What astonished them was what those people could do. How they had freely and openly debated and discussed, with arguments and counter-arguments, everything in nature and the world. How everything interested them. These people were to serve as their models.

A great search for books written in Latin began, and people strove to write Latin that was as clear and as precise as that of the ancient Romans. They also learnt Greek and so discovered the wonderful works of the Athenians of the time of Pericles. Soon people were more interested in Themistocles and Alexander, in Caesar and in Augustus than in Charlemagne or Barbarossa. It was as if the entire period since antiquity had been nothing but a dream, as if the free city of Florence was about to become an Athens or a Rome. People suddenly felt they were witnessing a re-birth of the ancient, long-gone era of Greek and Roman culture. They themselves felt born again through the discovery of these ancient works. And this is why this period in history came to be known in Italy as the *Rinascimento*, or as we know it from the French, the *Renaissance*—the re-birth. Everything that had happened in between they blamed on the barbarian Germanic tribes who had destroyed the empire.





## From *A Little History of the World*

by E. H. Gombrich, trans. Caroline Mustill

*Today's selection continues the story of the Renaissance.*

The Florentines were determined to do all they could to revive the spirit of antiquity.

They were enthusiasts for everything Roman, for the superb statues and the magnificent and imposing buildings whose ruins lay all over Italy. Previously dismissed as “heathen ruins,” these had been shunned and feared. Now people suddenly rediscovered their beauty. And the Florentines once more began to build with columns.

But people didn't just seek out old things. They looked at nature again, this time with the fresh and unprejudiced eyes of the Athenians, two thousand years before them. And when they did so they discovered a new beauty in the world, in the sky and trees, in human beings, flowers and animals. They painted these things as they saw them. The solemn grandeur and spirituality of the illustrations to sacred texts in monks' books and cathedral windows, now gave way to a style that was natural and spontaneous, full of colour and vitality, yet accurate and true to life as they intended. Using your eyes and acting accordingly also made for the best art. Which might explain why the greatest painters and sculptors were to be found in Florence at this time.

Nor did these painters merely sit down before their paintings like good craftsmen and represent what they saw. They wanted to understand what it was that they were painting. In Florence there was one artist in particular for whom painting good paintings was not enough, no matter how beautiful they might be. And his were far and away the finest. He wanted to have a perfect understanding of all the things he painted and how they related to each other. This painter's name was Leonardo da Vinci. He lived from 1452 to 1519 and was the son of a farm servant-girl. He wanted to know how a person looked when they cried and when they laughed, and also what the inside of a human body was like—the muscles, bones and sinews. So he asked hospitals to give him the bodies of people who had died, which he then dissected and explored. This was something quite unheard of at the time. And he did not stop there. He also looked at plants and animals in a new way and puzzled over what makes birds able to fly. This led him to think about whether people, too, might not be able to fly. He was the first person to carry out an accurate and precise investigation into the possibility of constructing an artificial bird or flying machine. And he was convinced that one day it would be done. He was interested in everything in nature. Nor did

he limit himself to the writings of Aristotle and the Arab thinkers. He always wanted to know if what he read was really true. So, above all, he used his eyes, and with those eyes he saw more than anyone had ever seen before, because he was always asking himself questions about what he observed. Whenever he wanted to know about something—for example, why whirlpools happen or why hot air rises—he did an experiment. He had little time for the learned writings of his contemporaries and was the first person to investigate the secrets of nature by means of experiments. He made sketches and noted down his observations on scraps of paper and in a vast accumulation of notebooks. Leafing through his jottings today, one is constantly amazed that a single human being could investigate and analyse so many different things, things about which nothing was known at the time and few cared to know about.



