

# Using This Book

*Writing with Ease: Strong Fundamentals* will take you through the step-by-step process of teaching young students to write, over the course of four carefully graded levels of assignments. Each level is designed to be completed in a single school year of 36 weeks, although many students will move more quickly and some will need to progress at a slightly slower pace.

For each step in the process, I have provided a week of complete, scripted lessons, including reading passages and narration and copywork assignments. You can then choose to continue to work on the skills described by selecting your own reading, narration, and copywork assignments from the student's history, science, and literature books, or from your own favorite texts. Parents and teachers who have strong opinions about the topics they prefer students to cover may wish to take this route.

However, you can also make use of the workbooks published by Well-Trained Mind Press. These workbooks contain, in worksheet form, the scripted lessons laid out in this text; they also contain fully developed lessons for all 36 weeks of the school year, including copywork worksheets, dictation instructions and worksheets, reading passages, comprehension questions, and sample narrations. Although these workbooks are not necessary to complete *Writing with Ease*, they are designed to help you spend your time teaching, rather than searching for source materials.

For more information on the workbooks, go to [welltrainedmind.com](http://welltrainedmind.com).

## **Year One**

### **First Grade or Level One**

#### **Year One, Weeks 1–3**

Copywork sentences are around four to eight words; beginning narration exercises are practiced on two-paragraph readings.

#### **Year One, Weeks 4–10**

Copywork sentences remain essentially the same length, but introduce proper names. Narration exercises grow a little longer. The student begins to use his own narration sentences for copywork; this is the first step towards writing original sentences.

#### **Year One, Weeks 11–19**

Copywork sentences grow slightly longer; additional proper names are introduced, as well as pronouns. Narration exercises consist of three longer paragraphs. The student continues to use his own sentences for copywork.

#### **Year One, Weeks 20–27**

Copywork sentences lengthen again and introduce abbreviations, titles of respect, the seasons, and proper usage. Narrations lengthen as well. The student continues to use his own sentences for copywork.

#### **Year One, Weeks 28–35**

Copywork sentences lengthen once more and introduce proper poetic form and a variety of ending punctuation marks. Narrations also become more complex. The student continues to use his own sentences for copywork.

#### **Year One Mastery Evaluation, Week 36**

## Year Two

### Second Grade or Level Two

#### Year Two, Weeks 1–10

The student begins dictation by first copying a sentence of ten to twelve words, and then taking the sentence from dictation on another day; the sentences introduce action and linking verbs, the four sentence types, and comma use. Narration passages begin at around four paragraphs; after answering comprehension questions, the student identifies the most important element of the passage. Narration sentences are used for dictation after the student examines them.

#### Year Two, Weeks 11–18

Copywork sentences are still used for dictation, but their length grows to 12 to 15 words; the sentences introduce helping verbs, contractions, adjectives, interjections, conjunctions, and direct quotations. Narration passages expand slightly in length; narration sentences are used for dictation, but the student does not examine them first.

#### Year Two, Weeks 19–27

Copywork sentences are still used for dictation; dialogue and multiple sentences are introduced. Narration passages remain the same length; narration sentences are used for dictation, but the student does not examine them first.

#### Year Two, Weeks 28–35

Dictation sentences of 12 to 15 words *replace* copywork; articles, prepositions, synonyms, and antonyms are emphasized. Narration passages increase in length; the student is encouraged to answer the more general “Can you give me a short summary of this passage?” Narration sentences are used for dictation, but the student does not examine them first.

#### Year Two Mastery Evaluation, Week 36

## **Year Three**

### **Third Grade or Level Three**

#### **Year Three, Weeks 1–10**

Narration exercises remain around six paragraphs, but the student reads the passage independently before answering comprehension questions; he then summarizes the passage in two or three short sentences. Dictation sentences remain at 12 to 15 words, alternating one long and two short sentences; narration sentences are used for dictation.

#### **Year Three, Weeks 11–19**

Narration exercises remain around the same length. The student reads the passage independently before answering comprehension questions and providing a brief summary. Dictation exercises lengthen to 15 to 18 words of two sentences, taken down after three repetitions; two narration sentences are used for dictation.

#### **Year Three, Weeks 20–27**

Narration exercises remain the same length, but the student narrates without first answering comprehension questions. Dictation exercises lengthen to 16 to 20 words of two longer or three shorter sentences, taken down after three repetitions; two narration sentences are used for dictation.

#### **Year Three, Weeks 28–35**

Narration exercises lengthen. Dictation exercises remain at 16 to 20 words, two longer or three shorter sentences, taken down after three repetitions. The student repeats one sentence of his narration to himself and takes the sentence down from his own dictation.

#### **Year Three Mastery Evaluation, Week 36**

## **Optional: Year Four** Fourth Grade or Level Four

### **Year Four, Weeks 1–10**

Narration exercises lengthen to eight to ten paragraphs; the student continues to respond to directed narration starters. Dictation exercises remain at approximately 20 words, two longer or three shorter sentences, taken down after three repetitions. The student repeats one sentence of his narration to himself and takes the sentence down from his own dictation.

### **Year Four, Weeks 11–19**

Narration exercises remain at around the same length. Dictation exercises remain at around 20 words, but introduce proper paragraph form. The student repeats two narration sentences to himself and takes the sentences down from his own dictation.

### **Year Four, Weeks 20–27**

Narration exercises lengthen slightly. Dictation exercises lengthen to 25- to 30-word paragraphs, repeated three times. The student repeats two narration sentences to himself and takes the sentences down from his own dictation.

### **Year Four, Weeks 28–35**

Narration exercises remain at the same length; after reading the passage independently, the student answers the general question “What is this passage about?” rather than relying on directed narration starters. Dictation exercises remain 25- 30-word paragraphs, repeated three times. The student writes his own narration in proper paragraph form.

### **Year Four Mastery Evaluation, Week 36**