A Creative Approach to the Classical Progymnasmata

REVISED EDITION

Writing & Rhetoric

Book 5: Refutation & Confirmation

Teacher's Edition

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Refutation & Confirmation

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A Typical Teaching Week

These guidelines are intended to help bring some predictability to lesson planning. Although the elements of grammar are important aspects of this course, its primary focus is writing and rhetoric. We recommend that you teach a simple, but rich, grammar curriculum in parallel with the lessons in *Writing & Rhetoric: Refutation & Confirmation*. By simple, we mean to suggest that you avoid a grammar program with a writing component. Two different writing methods would most likely work against each other and cause an imbalance in the school day. Instead, look for a grammar program that focuses on grammatical concepts, that provides plenty of practice sentences, and that encourages diagramming.

Teachers, you may want to provide same-day grammar instruction several days a week, preferably separating Writing & Rhetoric from grammar study by several hours. Or, you may want to alternate weeks between a grammar program and Writing & Rhetoric. This requires some negotiation in your language arts program for the year. If you aim to do two Writing & Rhetoric books per school year, that would equal approximately twenty-five lessons. If you spend one week on each lesson, that leaves you with approximately ten weeks to focus on grammar. You will have to choose a grammar program based on the needs you observe in your students.

Day One

1. The teacher models fluency by reading the text aloud while students follow along silently.
2. "Tell It Back" (Narration) and "Talk About It" should immediately follow the reading of the text, while the story is still fresh in the students' minds. "Talk About It" is designed to help students analyze the meaning of texts and to see analogous situations, both in the world and in their own lives. Narration, the process of "telling back," can be done in pairs or by selecting individuals to narrate to the entire class. Solo students can tell back the story into a recording device or to an instructor. The process of narration is intended to improve comprehension and long-term memory.

Days Two and Three

1. Optional: The teacher can appoint a student to read the text again to the class or pair students to reread it independently.
2. Students work with the text through the "Go Deeper" and "Writing Time" exercises. "Go Deeper" is all about building vocabulary and understanding the nuances of the text better. "Writing Time" includes sentence play, copiousness, and the refutation or confirmation exercises themselves. You will probably want to take more than one day for this step.

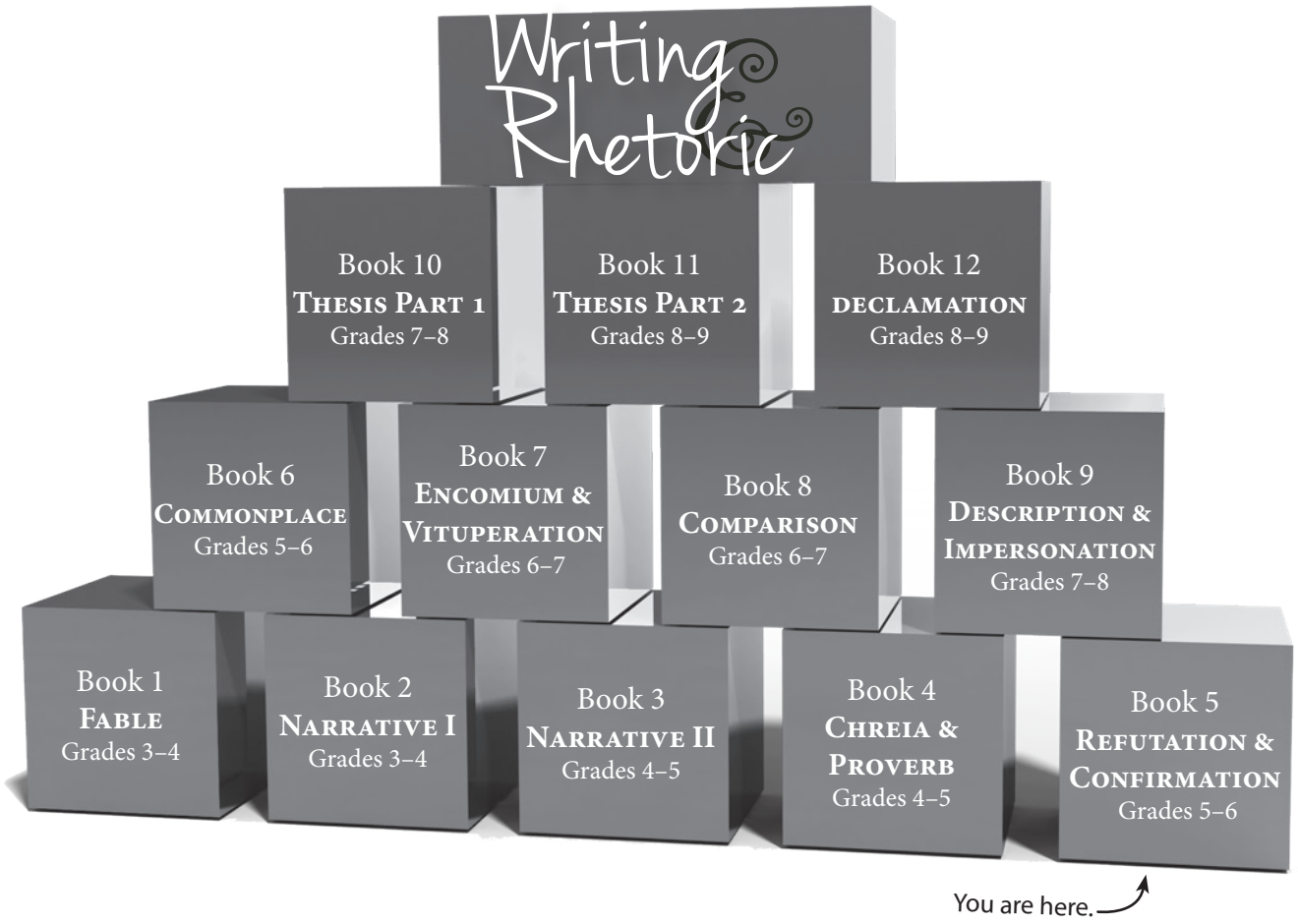
Day Four

1. Rather than going directly to revision, we recommend that students take a breather from their essays for a day while they work on their speaking skills. Keeping a day between essay completion and revision helps students to look at their work with fresh eyes.
2. The "Speak It" section creates opportunities for students to memorize, recite, play word games, and playact. Please consider using a recording device whenever it suits the situation. When using electronics, the student should listen to his recording to get an idea of what

sounds right and what needs to be improved. Have students read the elocution instructions to help them work on skill in delivery.

Day Five

At this level, students will take an important step toward revision. The first several lessons in this book provide basic exercises that introduce students to revision. Later in the book, the lessons provide a self-editing checklist that covers some of the most important aspects of improving an essay. Most students can do rudimentary self-editing at this age and provide some useful feedback to each other. However, teachers are still the best source for giving editorial feedback and requesting rewrites.



Introduction to Students

On the Road to Rhetoric

Have you ever heard the Willie Nelson tune "On the Road Again"? Don't worry, I'm not going to sing it for you, but it goes like this:

> On the road again,
> Just can't wait to get on the road again . . .
> Goin' places that I've never been,
> Seein' things that I may never see again.
> And I just can't wait to get on the road again.

Well, here you are, on the road again. You are on a long stretch of highway called Writing & Rhetoric, and you are most definitely going places where you've never been. You've already cruised through several fascinating places. Your first stop was Fable, which was all about short moral tales with talking animals. Your second stop was Narrative, which includes all forms of story, from history to mystery. And now you are leaving Chreia—which focused on short remembrances about useful sayings or deeds—in the rearview mirror as you motor on down the road.

Unlike the words of the song, you won't see things and never see them again. The beauty of this program is that you never really leave behind the things you've learned. You will use, and reuse, each and every skill along the way. That's because we want those skills to become powerful tools of communication for you, whether you're writing or speaking.

Every road trip needs a destination, right? You're not simply going for a Sunday drive and burning gas. The place you're heading to is called Rhetoric. Do you remember the meaning of this important Greek word? Rhetoric is the art and practice of persuasive writing and speaking.

The Greek philosopher Plato called rhetoric "the art of winning souls through speech." The Roman leader Cicero said that rhetoric was "speech aimed at persuasion." The English philosopher John Locke saw rhetoric as a way "to make one man's thoughts and ideas known to another." This book is the first in the series in which you will actually try to win, to persuade, to make your ideas known to readers. You will be commenting on parts of the stories you read and trying to convince readers that your ideas are right. Do the stories contain parts that are worthy of praise? Or do they contain parts that are not so great? Perhaps your rhetoric will be so well done that your readers will agree with what you say. Hey, it's worth a try.

So, let's get a move on! The road sign says, "Rhetoric straight ahead!"

Introduction

If you've picked up Writing & Rhetoric books and asked, somewhat mystified, "Where's the prewriting? Where's the outlining from scratch? Is there enough expository writing in this series?" I commend you for asking these good questions! They indicate that you are serious and thoughtful about finding a curriculum for your students that optimizes their chances for success.

Before I address these questions, it might help for you to know where I am coming from and where I want to take you. If you happened to be lost in a forest and you met a guy with twigs in his beard and bird droppings on his shoulders, you might well believe that he has spent quite a few years wandering the forest. But before you let him serve as your guide, you will still want to know how well he really knows the landscape and if he is going to lead you to the nearest road or off the nearest cliff. To show you how well I know the "landscape" and where I will lead you, please allow me to share with you a brief history of rhetoric and composition as it relates to the method in the Writing & Rhetoric books.

Two thousand–plus years ago, the Greeks developed a system of persuasive speaking known as rhetoric. The Romans fell in love with rhetoric because it was both practical for the real world and served the need of training orators in their growing republic. In order to prepare their students for oration, the Romans invented a complementary system of persuasive writing known as the *progymnasmata*: *pro-* meaning preliminary and *gymnas* meaning exercises. The *progymnasmata* were the primary method in Graeco-Roman schools used to teach young people the elements of rhetoric. This happened in a grammar school (called a *grammaticus*) sometime after a student reached the age of ten.

There are several ancient "progyms" still in existence. The most influential progyms were by Hermogenes of Tarsus, who lived in the second century, and by Aphthonius of Antioch, who lived during the fourth century just as the western Roman Empire was collapsing. Even after the great cities of Rome lay in ruins, the progym continued as the primary method for teaching writing during the Middle Ages and even into early modern times.

The Writing & Rhetoric series is based on the *progymnasmata* of ancient Rome. This method assumes that students learn best by reading excellent examples of literature and by growing their skills through imitation. It is incremental, meaning that it goes from simpler exercises to more complex exercises, and it moves from the concrete to the abstract. One of the beauties of the progym is that it grows with the student through the stages of childhood development termed the "trivium"[1] by modern classical education, effectively taking a young writer from the grammar phase through the logic phase and finally to the rhetoric phase.

I believe that the progym is every bit as valuable today as it was hundreds of years ago. Before I explain why this is so, it might be helpful to take a look back on the history of composition for the last 150 years. How we were trained to write as schoolchildren creates certain expectations as we evaluate any writing program. However, these expectations may or may not square with a course in classical composition that leads to rhetoric.

Modern Composition

Depending on when you learned to write, you were most likely immersed in one of several pools of composition theory. If you learned to write before the 1970s, you learned the current-traditional com-

1. In medieval times, the trivium was originally the lower division of the seven liberal arts. For the modern idea that these studies correspond to childhood development, please refer to Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning*, available as an audio CD from classicalacademicpress.com..

position theory. We call it "traditional" because it is old—over 150 years old—and it is "current" because it continues to be taught. The primary method in Writing & Rhetoric, the *progymnasmata* of ancient Rome, gave birth to the current-traditional theory. The current-traditional method makes its rounds by means of the modes of discourse—exposition, description, narration, and argumentation. It is a bit bandaged up because it has been nicked and cut with a great deal of criticism in the last sixty-odd years.

The focus of the current-traditional method is proper English grammar and compositions that take a very specific and prescribed form (e.g., five-paragraph essays with an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion). Elegance of style rules over every other consideration. Proponents of the current-traditional method generally agree that the best style has clearness of expression, with a stamp of individuality on it, and is not falsely ornamented, but properly grammatical.

Now, many educators who desire to reclaim the classical tradition for modern students would embrace various aspects of the current-traditional method. We see good grammar as the basis of clear communication. We see stylish writing as a sign of careful attention and an appreciation of the beauty of language. We like prescribed forms because they are easy to teach and master. I suspect that many courses that purport to be classical writing are nothing more than the current-traditional method dressed up in fresh clothes. And yet there's something missing in this type of writing, something so crucial and vital that it took the next wave of writing theory to point it out: Current-traditional method relies so heavily on form and style that substance is neglected.

If you learned to write in the 1970s and beyond, you have been heavily influenced by the process approach to writing, which cropped up in the 1960s as a way to give more freedom and autonomy to writers. The educational researchers who gave us "process" criticized the idea of a finished, polished product of writing (i.e., the five-paragraph essay) divorced from any passion or any authentic effort to communicate. They contended that students rarely consider their audience when writing traditional papers. Arguments are not tailored to persuade any particular group of people. Just as problematic, students don't often have a desire to communicate significant ideas through the traditional forms, but rather complete their papers by rote. In other words, they write a paper because they had an assignment and not because they had a conviction about a book or subject. The process approach is a reaction against the stylish yet rote compositions done by the traditionalists. Process theorists emphasized, instead, self-discovery through language.

The process approach emphasizes the process of the writer as essential to the finished product of writing. The majority of time spent in process writing is devoted to "prewriting" or, in Professor Donald Murray's words, "in everything that takes place before the first draft. . . . It includes the awareness of the world from which the subject is born. . . . In prewriting, the writer focuses on that subject, spots an audience, chooses a form which may carry his subject to his audience. Prewriting may include research and daydreaming, note-making and outlining, title-writing and lead-writing."[2] The writing and rewriting stages are also important, but the innovation is in the prewriting stage of this method.

So, you see, the process approach to writing introduces, or I should say reintroduces, something very good and necessary to composition: the intention of the author, an awareness of the audience, and the understanding that we use writing as a form of thinking. Without this, writing degenerates into empty and terribly dull formulae. Writing & Rhetoric embraces the process of the author as well as traditional style, but in both cases, as you will see, it takes a different tack.

Beyond the process approach, we now also have post-process theories, which reject any generalized explanation of the writer's process. These ideas take the perspective that the writer is "situated" in a certain context and that within this context knowledge is created. Knowledge is not some

2. Donald M. Murray, "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," *The Leaflet*, November 1972.

objective reality waiting to be discovered by the writer. In essence, reality is built either individually or in a social setting. Post-process theorists would deny any sort of grand scheme to explain or teach writing, just as a postmodern theorist is wary of any generalized narratives of human existence. Though rich and abundant, even words are considered unreliable by post-process theorists, as they often carry different meanings for different people. As such, a structured writing program such as Writing & Rhetoric might be considered limited and unreasonably authoritative to a post-process teacher, who recognizes no hard-and-fast writing pedagogy.

Authentic Classical Writing—The Vitality of Rhetoric

In my estimation, all of these ideas about writing are more or less inadequate. Each has an insight that the theory took too far and failed to balance with other insights. They all miss the mark of what we once had in classical writing. This is because composition has been cut off from its roots in rhetoric. In the classic world, composition served rhetoric, the art of persuasive speech, as a means to an end. The content of the composition was expected to have a purpose, rather than existing as a purposeless exercise in expression. The practice of skillful composition was designed to enhance persuasive public speaking. At the same time, rhetoric asserted that words have precise meanings and that ideas have universal, cross-cultural relevance rooted in our common existence as human beings.

In a democracy such as Athens or a republic such as Rome, rhetoric was a powerful way to enter into public conversations. In the words of Yale rhetorician Charles Sears Baldwin, "Rhetoric is conceived by Aristotle as the art of giving effectiveness to the truth." He adds that "the true theory of rhetoric is the energizing of knowledge, the bringing of truth to bear upon men. . . ." Rhetoric thus had an intentional public purpose, that is, to persuade people to embrace truth and its corollaries: virtue and beauty. It is designed to enjoin right behavior by holding up to public scrutiny examples of goodness and wickedness. There is an urgency and a real purpose to rhetoric. It was never meant to be empty forms of speaking and composition. It was never meant to be only eloquence and skill of delivery.[3] At the same time, rhetoric was not meant to be full of purpose poorly delivered—a poor delivery would only undermine the effectiveness of the purpose.

So here we come to the heart of the matter. The reasoning of the author (process) adds strength and purpose to elegance of style and form (current-traditional) and occurs within a particular context (post-process). Rather than separate elements that fall short when used independently, the three are married together in rhetoric—form, substance, and context united. I believe that a return to rhetoric, to persuasive argument fired by a passion for virtue and in service to humanity, is progress in the best sense of the word. I believe that composition theory finds its highest expression in classical writing reinterpreted for the needs of the modern world.

3. Charles Sears Baldwin goes on to note that a "sophistic tendency" was a perpetual problem in the history of rhetoric. In essence, the sophistic was the weed that grew up alongside rhetoric and tried to choke off the more nutritious plant. The history of sophistry in the ancient world is long and illustrious, but in modern parlance it has come to mean clever and deceptive reasoning. Baldwin says, "What has intervened to deviate rhetoric and frustrate its best use has again and again been the preoccupation with giving effectiveness not to the message, but to the speaker." In other words, the speaker and delivery became more important than the urgency and significance of the content. In writing, the compositions can be overly prescribed and technical. Not even the *progymnasmata* have escaped this criticism. Baldwin criticized the "fixed topics" of the *progymnasmata* as "arid" and "impersonal as arithmetic." (Baldwin, *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetry [to 1400]: Interpreted from Representative Works* [New York: Macmillan, 1928], n.p.)

   In Writing & Rhetoric, we seek to overcome any tendency to be overly prescribed or technical by encouraging imitative self-expression and real moral purpose. We want for young people to clearly see a model, but then to attempt, as soon as possible, to put these ideas into practice by expressing their own ideas.

In this series I've sought to do just that. I aim not to be purely backward-looking, but to bring those excellent, time-tested practices into today's classroom. I have done so by drawing on the expertise of educators who have taught writing in a variety of settings from grade school through college. For the better part of fourteen years, I have taught writing to students at elementary and middle school levels and guided the writing curriculum at my school. These students live in an urban environment and come from both privileged and less privileged backgrounds; the Writing & Rhetoric approach has been effective in both cases.

The best preparation for rhetoric is still, as practiced by the ancients, the *progymnasmata*, the preliminary exercises. In the *progym*, every aspect of rhetoric is part of the training, from the three types of audience appeal to the five canons (or laws) of rhetoric. (This terminology will be explained in greater depth to students as the series progresses.)

The *progymnasmata* as applied by Writing & Rhetoric serve the development of rhetoric admirably. Writing & Rhetoric is a creative take on the *progym* designed to meet the needs of modern children. We have understood both the method as it was used for the Romans and the demands that contemporary students must meet.

- It teaches the four modes of discourse—narration, exposition, description, and argumentation—while at the same time blending them for maximum persuasive impact.
- It is incremental, moving from easier forms to harder forms. The level of challenge is appropriate for students as they mature with the program.
- It uses "living" stories, from ancient to modern, and is not stuck in any particular time period. Rather, it follows a timeline of history so that the stories can be integrated with history lessons.
- Its stories engage the imagination and also spark a desire in young people to imitate them. In this way, Writing & Rhetoric avoids the "blank-page syndrome" that can paralyze many nascent writers by giving students a model from which to write.
- It promotes virtue by lifting up clear-cut examples of good and bad character.
- It fosters the joy of learning by providing opportunities for creative play and self-expression as well as classroom fun.
- It uses speaking to enhance the development of persuasive composition.
- It provides opportunities for students to learn from other students' work and to present their own work.

Questions about Apparent Omissions

So now, what about certain aspects of current-traditional and process approach writing? Does Writing & Rhetoric cover these? For example, what about prewriting? What about outlining? What about exposition?

Let's first examine prewriting, which is essentially another word for brainstorming and research. We can look at prewriting as a conversation that the writer has with herself. Although prewriting and graphic organizers can be useful, I believe that dialogue is the most effective means of thinking through the task at hand and of avoiding writer's block. In other words, conversations are a great way to prepare for the process of writing.

The Greek philosopher Plato is famous for a process of discussion and argumentation called dialectic. In these dialectical conversations, the teacher would ask questions about an opinion held by a student and would keep pressing in until deeper truths were revealed. Similarly, modern teachers can guide students toward thoughtful writing by asking probing questions and following up on an-

swers with other questions. The idea is not to ask leading questions, but instead to ask open-ended questions so that the student reaches her own conclusions. In Writing & Rhetoric, this conversation—verbal prewriting—is explicitly encouraged in our Talk About It sections, but dialectic can occur any time during the process, including during revision.

Revision is introduced for the first time in this book through the Revise It section. Why didn't we do it sooner? Quite often younger, grammar-age students are too concrete in their thinking to see the flaws in their own writing. It often takes a brain that has matured in the direction of abstract thinking, as well as in grammatical conventions, to evaluate writing and revise it appropriately. Just as writing is necessarily incremental, so is the process of revision. In this volume we introduce some specific pointers to aid in reviewing and changing writing. Please keep in mind, however, that revision takes critical thinking, and this type of higher-level thinking takes time and practice. Not every student matures at the same pace. You, the teacher, know your students and will be able to make comments and corrections that best support their needs.

Outlining from scratch, a tool associated with current-traditional and process approach writing, is also very useful in classical writing. However, it is important not to put the cart before the horse. The *progym* provides the outline for various types of compositions, from the chreia to the thesis paper, and encourages students to think resourcefully and flexibly within these prearranged forms. In this way, the *progym* encourages students in the grammar and logic phases of their development to be imitative of writing models. As with all things in education, we must be careful not to overload the cognitive function of young people. When the outline is provided, students have more freedom of expression within the form itself. As a student grows older, especially as a student enters the rhetoric phase of development, outlining from scratch becomes more tenable. In this book, we continue outlining as a subset of narration whereby stories are reconstructed in outline form. This method helps familiarize students with the structure of outlines without burdening them too soon to employ rhetorical thinking. And, even narration, orally "telling back," is an elementary form of outlining that prepares students for the more complex process of laddering details in order of importance.

What about exposition? Expository writing is often called informational writing and is primarily used to "expose" or explain a topic. It can clarify a process, analyze an event, extend a definition, introduce a problem and propose a solution, or describe how to do something. "The Art of Building the Perfect Hamburger" and "Why the Unsinkable *Titanic* Sank" are sample titles that could be classified as expository. It's true that up to this point Writing & Rhetoric has emphasized narrative and descriptive writing. However, many aspects of expository writing are now in place and are being bolstered with every lesson. These include:

- introducing and concluding the main topic
- informing and explaining the basis of an opinion
- summary
- use of narrative to capture interest
- developing paragraphs
- extending description

In fact, expository papers rely on a firm grasp of narrative and description to properly explain and inform.

Onward!

As educators, I think we need to admit that teaching writing is difficult. This is because writing makes big demands on cognitive function and, for many beginning writers, can easily become overwhelming. Our brains need to simultaneously do the following:

- utilize motor skills
- process vocabulary
- sequence and organize ideas
- employ grammatical concepts
- draw upon a reservoir of good writing—hopefully the reservoir exists—as a template for new writing

That's a tall order. Also, writing contains a subjective element. It's not as clear-cut as math. And when you add argumentation to the mix, you have a very complex process indeed. To be properly educated, every person needs to be able to make and understand arguments.

It is from this list of complexities that a desire for a relatively easy-to-implement curriculum was born. My hope is that this introduction has clarified why this series follows the classical method of composition and how it naturally integrates helpful elements from other writing methods. While the task of teaching writing is difficult, it is my sincere belief that reconnecting the tree of modern composition to its classical roots in rhetoric will refresh the entire process. Regardless of your personal writing history, I trust that these books will provide a happy and rewarding experience for your students.

Best Foot Forward

The *Progym* and the Practice of Modern Writing

Although the *progym* are an ancient method of approaching writing, they are extraordinarily relevant today. This is because modern composition developed from the *progym*. Modern writing borrows heavily from many of the *progym*'s various exercises. For example, modern stories are essentially unchanged from the ancient fable and narrative forms. Modern expository essays contain elements from the ancient chreia, the refutation/confirmation, and other *progym* exercises. Persuasive essays of today are basically the same as the ancient commonplace and thesis exercises. In this series, you can expect your students to grow in all forms of modern composition—narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive—while at the same time developing unique rhetorical muscle.

The *progym* cover many elements of a standard English and language arts curriculum. In *Refutation & Confirmation* these include:[4]

- experiencing both the reading of a story (sight) and listening to it (hearing)
- analyzing text that is organized in sequential or chronological order
- demonstrating an understanding of texts by creating outlines, summarizing, and paraphrasing in ways that maintain meaning and logical order within a text
- comparing and contrasting two or more characters, settings, or events in a story, drawing on specific details in the text
- determining a theme from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges

4. This list was derived from the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part II, Chapter 110: Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading (http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html), the Core Knowledge Foundation's Core Knowledge Sequence: Content and Skill Guidelines for Grades K-8 (http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/documents/480/CKFSequence_Rev.pdf), the English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/elacontentstnds.pdf), and the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

- determining the meaning of words (in some cases by using word origins) and phrases, including figurative language, as they are used in a text
- articulating an understanding of several ideas or images communicated by the literary work
- critiquing the credibility of characterization and the degree to which a plot is contrived or realistic
- drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research
- participating civilly and productively in group discussions
- writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly
- introducing a topic or text clearly, stating an opinion, and creating an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped into coherent paragraphs to support the writer's purpose
- introducing claims and supporting them with clear and logically organized reasons that are supported by facts and details
- developing the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples
- providing a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented
- using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic
- establishing and maintaining a formal style
- producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- with some guidance and support from peers and adults, developing and strengthening writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- using technology as an aid to revision and oration

While these standards are certainly worthwhile and are addressed in this curriculum, the *progym* derive their real strength from the incremental and thorough development of each form of writing. The Writing & Rhetoric series does not skip from form to form and leave the others behind, but rather builds a solid foundation of mastery by blending the forms. For example, no expository essay can truly be effective without description. No persuasive essay can be convincing without narrative. All good narrative writing requires description, and all good persuasive writing requires expository elements. Not only do the *progym* demand strong organization and implement many of the elements of modern language arts, but they also retain all of the power of classical rhetoric.

Here Is How the *Progym* Develop Each Stage of Modern Composition:

1. Fable—Narrative
2. Narrative—Narrative with descriptive elements
3. Chreia & Proverb—Expository essay with narrative, descriptive, and persuasive elements
4. Refutation & Confirmation—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
5. Commonplace—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
6. Encomium & Vituperation—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
7. Comparison—Comparative essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
8. Description & Impersonation—Descriptive essays with narrative, expository, persuasive, and comparative elements

9. Thesis Part 1—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements
10. Thesis Part 2—Persuasive speech with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements, as well as the three rhetorical appeals
11. Declamation—Persuasive essay or speech that marshals all the elements of the *progym* and brings them to bear upon judicial matters

As you can see, the *progym* move quickly to establish the importance of one form to another.

Objectives for *Refutation & Confirmation*

The following are some of the major objectives for the exercises found in each section of this book:

1. Expose students to various forms of narrative writing as well as culturally important stories from the early American period.
2. Model fluent reading for students and give them practice reading short texts.
3. Facilitate student interaction with well-written texts through discussions and exercises in evaluation and critical thinking.
4. Review the concepts of narrative, plot, character, fable, parable, fairy tale, history, myth, and ballad, with an additional focus on legend and the introduction of biography.
5. Introduce the concepts of argument versus quarrel and refutation versus confirmation. Refutation and confirmation correspond to persuasive (or argumentative) essays in modern writing theory. They were extracted from two parts of classic oration by the same name.
6. Give students opportunities to creatively assess and critique narratives by weighing believability/unbelievability, probability/improbability, clarity/lack of clarity, and propriety/impropriety.
7. Reinforce the ability to summarize and paraphrase for greater rhetorical flexibility.
8. Strengthen working memory through recitation, thus improving storage of information. Memory is essential to any oration delivered with rhetorical power.
9. Increase understanding of the flexibility and copiousness of language through sentence manipulation.
10. Continue to make use of the persuasive essay using a four-step outline. The predetermined outline helps students to organize their thinking into patterns of ideas.
11. Introduce students to the concepts of revision, proofreading, and joint critiquing.

Teaching Refutation & Confirmation

This is the fifth book of the Writing & Rhetoric series. In this volume you and your students will examine the ancient exercises of refutation and confirmation. These exercises parallel two parts of classic oration, which you can see in the following outline of a typical speech from Roman times:

1. Introduction (*Exordium*): Here the orator establishes his or her credibility to speak about the topic at hand.
2. Statement of Facts (*Narratio*): Next the orator gives a narrative of the situation as it stands and proposes a main argument (thesis).
3. Division (*Partitio*): An outline of the rest of the speech is provided, and the most important arguments are marshalled to support the thesis but are not detailed.
4. Confirmation (*Confirmatio*): Here the orator goes into detail to support or prove his main argument.
5. Refutation (*Refutatio*): The orator then gives details about why opposing arguments (counter-arguments) are false or weak.
6. Conclusion (*Peroratio* or *Epilogos*): In ancient oration, a speech would usually end with an emotional appeal to the audience.

As you can see, this arrangement was potentially very powerful and persuasive in the hands of a capable orator. It starts by strengthening the position of the orator himself. Then it goes on to build a favorable case with a series of arguments, each one stronger than the one before. Next it anticipates and undercuts opposing arguments, and demonstrates that the orator has considered the topic from every angle. Finally, it tugs the heartstrings of the audience to win them to the speaker's side.

The ancient writers of the *progym*, Hermogenes and Aphthonius, both used the refutation and confirmation steps as preliminary exercises to boost their students' understanding of how to use argumentation for and against a subject. Both *progym* writers used narratives as their targets. The refutation was used to attack the credibility of a myth or legend, while the confirmation was used to defend the same myth or legend. Thus, the same story was undermined or supported, and argumentation occurred from both sides.

Please note that we have modified these exercises so that students attack or defend only an aspect or part of the narratives in this book. We believe that it is not necessary to critique a story such as *Tortoise Proves He's the Equal of Elephant and Hippo* as a whole. By examining a single aspect of the story, the purpose of the refutation and confirmation exercise is accomplished and the magic—the credibility—of the story remains intact.

In writing these little compositions, students take another step forward toward the goal of mastering rhetoric. They continue to use narrative as a foundation of pleasure and instruction, but the narrative is now a means to an end, rather than the end in itself. In order to write a refutation or confirmation, students will use the narrative to develop a persuasive essay with elements of narration, description, and exposition. In other words, all the basics are in place for creating persuasive speech or oratory, which is the goal of rhetoric. In addition, by looking more deeply into a story, students will extend their dialogic (conversational) relationship with it. The kinds of questions asked in refutation and confirmation will lead students to consider the story in the context of their lives.

You will find nearly every lesson organized around the chapter story. Narration, questions for discussion, and exercises in composition all emerge within the context of the story. We find that contextualization helps to reinforce memory and the laddering of skills.

The Chapter Story

Almost every lesson contains a short narrative. Part of the beauty of the Writing & Rhetoric series is the fact that it uses stories that are noteworthy in their own right. When children care about a character and what happens to him—when they get wrapped up in the language of the narrative—their delight helps them to write more enthusiastically. Well-told stories also populate students' minds with rich content. They get to practice skills without also having to invent content. All of the stories in the book are recorded in a downloadable MP3 file so that your students can experience the pleasure of being read to.

Tell It Back—Narration

Every time students hear a story in this book, they will also practice narrating the story back. Multiple intelligences—memory, sequence, main idea—are developed by this practice. In addition to exercising their executive functions, students will continue to internalize an outline of the material. They will review the skill of outlining and rediscover that they are already equipped to complete the task. Some educational models have based their entire strategy on the important skill of narration.

Talk About It and Speak It

These two sections mirror our conviction that writing, speaking, and thinking are critical skills that work together. Some educators believe that difficulties with writing stem from a deeper lack of thought. These books use comprehension, reading aloud, discussion, and even oral performance as ways to help students become critical thinkers according to the way their bodies (and brains) are made. These three abilities—thinking, speaking, and writing—practiced together enlarge each other.

Go Deeper

This section seeks to develop comprehension of the chapter story. In early lessons, students will examine individual words and roots of words, formal and informal language, and prefixes. In later lessons they will develop comprehension by asking the journalistic questions of who, what, where, when, and why. The questions, rather than draining a story of its delight, make the experience more vivid and stimulate an appetite for catching details that guide the student not only to the story's meaning but also to the pleasure of the story. In *Refutation & Confirmation*, these questions also call students' attention to elements that will help them in the writing task they are learning.

You will find a few multiple-choice questions in the "Go Deeper" section. Although classically minded educators often eschew multiple-choice questions, they are nonetheless a universal assessment tool and are used here sparingly to give students practice in analysis.

Writing Time

This aspect of the book is the most obvious. Each lesson features various kinds of writing practice, from sentence play (in which students imitate sentences) to copiousness (*copia*). Copiousness is a stretching exercise that teaches students to reach for new words to express variations of the same idea. That way they can experience the joy of the abundance of language as well as of finding precise words.

In this book students will also learn to write a four-paragraph persuasive essay. Each essay follows a clear pattern from paragraph to paragraph, and the principle of imitation is always at work.

The essays consist of the following: The first paragraph introduces the story and its author and then states an argument for or against part of the story. The second paragraph gives a short summary of the story in four or five sentences. The third paragraph uses sound arguments to attack (refute) or defend (confirm) part of the story. The categories for attacking arguments are unbelievable, improbable, unclear, and improper. The categories for defending arguments are believable, probable, clear, and proper. The fourth and final paragraph concludes the essay with an epilogue. Here the student can rephrase her argument or encourage readers to learn from the story.

Revise It

In this book, students will begin to critically analyze their own writing. Just as students will refute and confirm various parts of narratives, they will also take a similar approach to their own work. The Revise It section offers students the opportunity to improve their writing, and the writing of others, by identifying the main point (the main argument), supporting it from the text, strengthening phrasing, finding grammar errors, and proofreading.

Historical Note

The material covered in the Writing & Rhetoric series is loosely tied to periods in history. *Fable* and *Narrative I* borrow their stories from Greek and early Roman times. *Narrative II* picks up with the late Roman Empire, while *Chreia & Proverb* continues into the Middle Ages. *Refutation & Confirmation* carries us into the experience of colonial America. In the next book, *Commonplace*, students will read stories from the American Revolution, the Federalist period, and the French Revolution.

The purpose of this progression is to provide rich content that helps timeline-based schools integrate history with the language arts. As one discipline reinforces the other, students will retain a powerful impression of the periods of history they study.

Important Notes

Flexibility is built into the program.

We have crafted this book to be useful to students at different levels with different needs. For instance, teachers can ask their students to complete some exercises verbally instead of in writing. If, on the other hand, teachers desire more written work, they can ask students to respond to "Talk About It" questions in writing. Teachers can also have students work together to tackle parts of lessons that are difficult. Education is personal, and one size does not fit all. Please use your judgment to determine what is best for your student(s) in terms of discipline and delight.

Decide whether to do oral narration or outlining.

Teachers should decide whether oral narration or narration via outline would best serve their class. Oral narration serves the memory, while outlining improves understanding of story structure. Doing both is also a fine choice. Again, we aim for you to tailor this program to the needs of your students.

Review outlining instructions.
This icon guides students to a section of the book that provides a rationale and a model for outlining. Outline practice in this book is based on the chapter stories and is a way of narrating or telling the stories back. Students will not outline from scratch until later in this series. This method helps familiarize students to the structure of outlines without burdening them too soon to employ rhetorical thinking.

Review summarization instructions.
This icon points students to a section at the end of the book with detailed instructions on how to summarize. Here, students will learn how to distill a lengthy paragraph into a three-sentence and a one-sentence summary. To be succinct is to use words wisely. It is a way to communicate important information to the audience while showing concern for its needs. We see summary as a vital rhetorical skill with a myriad of uses from the mnemonic to the descriptive.

Include elocution instruction.
This icon indicates that elocution instruction should be included with the exercise. We believe that speaking well makes students better writers and that writing well makes for better speakers. In this book, we focus on the various aspects of speaking well, which include recitations, speeches, dramatic presentation, and the sharing of student work. We will prompt you in most "Speak It" sections to take a look at the back of the book for the full elocution instructions. Your students should practice one aspect of elocution every time they do public speaking.

Use a recording device.
This icon indicates that, depending on the size of the class and the availability of technology, you may want to have your student(s) record their work from the "Speak It" and sometimes the "Revise It" sections and play it back. This is an excellent way for them to hear the words and the qualities of their performances. They will learn elocution faster if they hear themselves as well as each other.

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the idea that narratives can be evaluated and that elements of them can be refuted or confirmed.

In this lesson, your students will practice:

- oral narration
- critical thinking
- comparing and contrasting
- fixing sentence fragments
- building copiousness using adjectives
- creating a dialogue between two characters
- giving a dramatic reading
- proofreading a paragraph

Lesson 1

Believe It or Not

"Pssst. Hey, kid! You. Yeah, you! Listen, I have a great deal for you, but don't tell anyone, OK? I'm the owner of the Brooklyn Bridge, and I'd like to sell it to you for only twenty bucks. Twenty bucks for this magnificent architectural wonder! I could easily sell it for fifty dollars, but because you look like a decent kid, you can have it for a measly twenty. Do we have ourselves a deal, kid?"

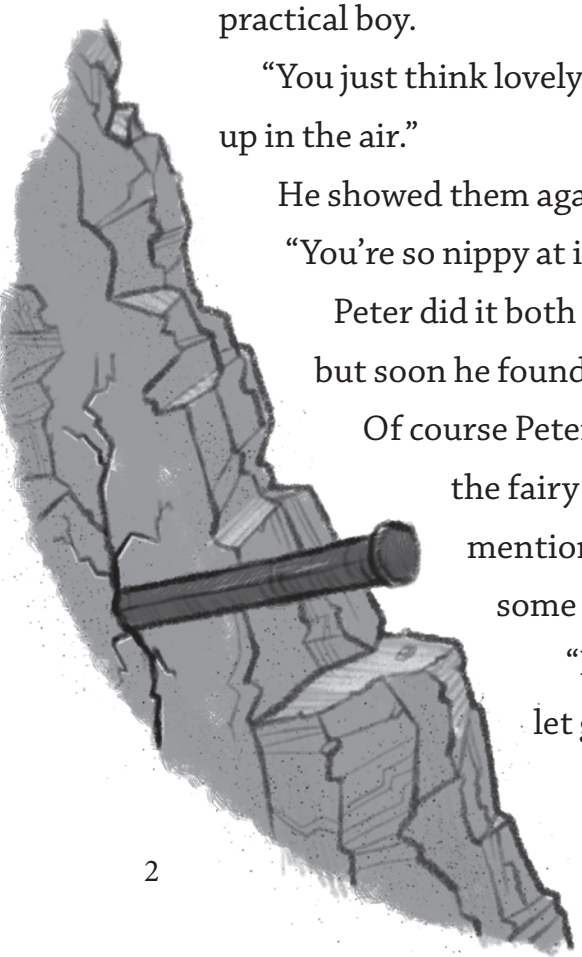
Believe it or not, there was a New Yorker named George C. Parker who convinced foolish people to buy the Brooklyn Bridge from him even though he didn't own it. He also sold people other famous landmarks he didn't own: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Grant's Tomb, and the Statue of Liberty. If he could have convinced people to buy the sun and the moon, he probably would have sold those as well. Nowadays when people say, "If you believe that story, I have a bridge to sell you," they are referring to George C. Parker selling the Brooklyn Bridge to **gullible** buyers.

Do you believe everything you hear? I hope you answer without hesitation, "Certainly not! Mama and Daddy didn't raise a fool!" This world of ours is full of liars,

boasters, and stretchers of the truth, and we might as well admit that it's no use believing everyone and everything.

On the other hand, some stories are meant to be believed for the sake of enjoying a good story. Consider the well-known book *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie. In this story we have a boy who never grows up, a shadow that gets away from its owner, children who fly, a fairy who rings like a tinkling bell, and a crocodile that ticks like a clock. The following is one of my favorite scenes, when the Darling children discover they can fly:

> "I say, Peter, can you really fly?" asked John.
>
> Instead of troubling to answer him Peter flew around the room, taking the mantelpiece on the way.
>
> "How topping!" said John and Michael.
>
> "How sweet!" cried Wendy.
>
> "Yes, I'm sweet, oh, I am sweet!" said Peter, forgetting his manners again.
>
> It looked delightfully easy, and they tried it first from the floor and then from the beds, but they always went down instead of up.
>
> "I say, how do you do it?" asked John, rubbing his knee. He was quite a practical boy.
>
> "You just think lovely wonderful thoughts," Peter explained, "and they lift you up in the air."
>
> He showed them again.
>
> "You're so nippy at it," John said, "couldn't you do it very slowly once?"
>
> Peter did it both slowly and quickly. "I've got it now, Wendy!" cried John, but soon he found he had not. Not one of them could fly an inch. . . .
>
> Of course Peter had been trifling with them, for no one can fly unless the fairy dust has been blown on him. Fortunately, as we have mentioned, one of his hands was messy with it, and he blew some on each of them, with the most superb results.
>
> "Now just wiggle your shoulders this way," he said, "and let go."



They were all on their beds, and gallant Michael let go first. He did not quite mean to let go, but he did it, and immediately he was borne across the room.

"I flewed!" he screamed while still in mid-air.

John let go and met Wendy near the bathroom.

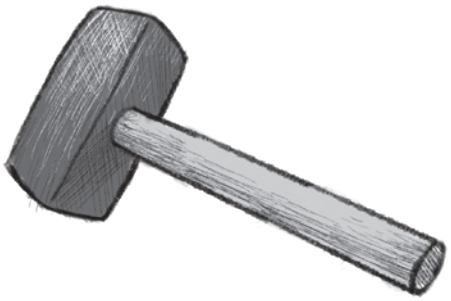
"Oh, lovely!"

"Oh, ripping!"

"Look at me!"

"Look at me!"

"Look at me!"



They were not nearly so elegant as Peter, they could not help kicking a little, but their heads were bobbing against the ceiling, and there is almost nothing so delicious as that. . . .

Up and down they went, and round and round. Heavenly was Wendy's word.

After the story about George C. Parker and the Brooklyn Bridge, you may be thinking that all of this stuff about Peter Pan is unbelievable and nonsense. There's no way people can fly with lovely thoughts and fairy dust alone, and, after all, you don't want to be gullible. Yet, here's what I have to say about that: If you think of J.M. Barrie and *Peter Pan* the same way you think of George C. Parker and the Brooklyn Bridge, that would be a great pity. That would take all the magic out of reading!

You see, there's a big difference between the Brooklyn Bridge story and *Peter Pan*. The first intends to harm us by stealing our money, and the second is meant to fill us with delight. The first is a real-life scam, and the second is a fictional fantasy. As a matter of fact, J.M. Barrie created such a convincing magical world that I am completely captured by it. When I read *Peter Pan*, I'm flying along with Peter, Wendy, John, and Michael, and I most certainly do believe in fairy dust. While I'm reading about Neverland, I believe pretty much everything that happens because J.M. Barrie is a master storyteller. While you certainly don't want to believe everything you hear, the whole point of reading a story such as *Peter Pan* is to get swept along to Neverland, a world of enchantment.

It is possible, however, that even when you believe and enjoy a story you're reading, you still might find that some *parts* of it are difficult to believe. If I had to argue with anything in *Peter Pan*, if I had to say that something is unbelievable in that story, it would be that Peter refused to be adopted by Mrs. Darling in the end. All of Peter's companions, all of the lost boys, happily agreed to be adopted, but not Peter. Peter flew off by himself because he refused to grow up. I find it hard to believe that Peter Pan, who wanted to have a mother in Neverland, refused to join the Darling family. I am willing to make an argument about Peter passing up the wonderful chance to have a real mother.

We find many different elements in a story, don't we? Things may happen in the story that we believe, and there may be some things we find hard to believe. Things may happen that seem probable, or likely, and sometimes things happen that don't seem probable at all. In nearly all narratives we see characters who are trustworthy and good examples of virtue, as well as other characters who are pretty repulsive. We see characters' actions that are proper and improper, and everything in-between. Sometimes part of a narrative itself can be very clear and understandable, and other times it can be unclear and hard to understand.

So what do we do when we see parts of a narrative that are unbelievable, improbable, unclear, or improper to us? We refute them. That means we criticize those parts and explain why we are doing so. (We will explain these four terms thoroughly in lesson 6.) When we see parts of a narrative that are believable, probable, clear, or proper, we confirm them. That means we explain why we think those parts are praiseworthy. In some ways you could see refutation as an attack and confirmation as a defense.

Refutation—a short essay that attacks certain parts of a narrative

Confirmation—a short essay that defends certain parts of a narrative

Refutation and confirmation—these are the two main types of written exercises you will practice in this book. Your job in this type of writing is to persuade your readers that your opinion is right.

Now, you may be tempted to ask, "Why on earth would I want to spend my time picking apart narratives? Doesn't that take some of the magic out of them?"

Let me assure you that this exercise is not about taking the magic out of stories. On the contrary, this exercise is designed to make you love truly good stories even more because you think about them more deeply. When you slow down and think carefully about what you read, you discover so much more to the story and are able to savor it, just as you would enjoy a meal better by slowing down to taste its different flavors and spices.

Refutation and confirmation are also wonderful ways for you to become a discerning, clear-thinking reader. You have all sorts of messages coming to you through the magical narratives of movies, television, plays, video games, and books, and it is wise for you to grow in your understanding of what your mind and heart are absorbing.

Recently I came across this popular joke:

A lady gets on a bus with her baby in her arms. The bus driver says, "Yowza! That is the ugliest baby I have ever seen!"

The lady goes to the rear of the bus with an angry look on her face. She sits down and says to another passenger, "The bus driver just insulted me!"

The passenger says, "How rude! You go up there and give the driver a piece of your mind. And I'll hold your little dog for you."

After I got over my chuckles, I thought more deeply about this joke. I wondered if it might cause some new parents to feel badly about their babies. One way to refute this joke would be to argue, "There's no such thing as an ugly baby. All babies are beautiful." Or, even better, I might argue that it's improper to insult someone's baby, a child who is dear to its parents and loved by them. On the other hand, there's something very trustworthy about this joke, something worth confirming: The joke demonstrates that there are plenty of rude people in this world—and that's worth knowing. As you can see, looking at the joke from different angles helped me to think more deeply about the joke itself.

Remember to keep the big picture in mind. You are marching down the road toward rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of writing and speaking persuasively, and the more fully you understand stories, the better your own stories will be when you are called on to tell them. Stories are very persuasive—as much now as at any time in history—and that is why we dwell on them. You must also learn how to argue for what you agree with and against what you don't agree with. What better way to learn to do this than with stories?

This is a good place to stop for a break if your students seem tired of reading or listening. You've already covered a lot of ground, and students may need some time to process what they have learned.

Now that you understand the ideas of refutation and confirmation, take a look at one story in particular and start considering how you might refute or confirm parts of it. It is the story of John Henry, the amazing steel driver of the C&O Railway. (A steel driver hammers holes in rock for the placement of explosives.) Henry may have been a real person from Mississippi who worked on the expansion of railroads after the Civil War. If his legends are based on fact, he would have likely been one of the strongest men in America at the time.

The legendary contest in John Henry's story takes place during the construction of the Big Bend Tunnel in West Virginia during the 1870s. As you read it through, think about how parts of the story can be either refuted or confirmed. In other words, think about what parts of this narrative are worthy of praise or criticism.

The Legend of John Henry

—adapted from *John Henry: A Folk-Lore Study* by Louis W. Chappell

John Henry was the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. He was the only man who could drive steel with two hammers, one in each hand. People came from miles around to watch him drive steel with his two twenty-pound hammers.

Two different railroad companies were working toward each other from opposite directions and planned to meet in a place called Big Bend Tunnel. One company had a steam drill, while the other used manpower to drill. When the two companies met,

everyone **asserted** that the steam drill was the greatest invention ever, but John Henry claimed, "I can sink more steel than any steam drill ever could." A contest was arranged along with a monetary prize. John Henry could win $100 for beating the steam drill.

John Henry had his foreman buy him two new twenty-pound hammers for the race. They were to drill for thirty-five minutes. When the contest was over, John Henry had drilled two holes seven feet deep, which was a total of fourteen feet. The steam drill had only drilled one hole nine feet deep, so the prize was given to John Henry.

When the race was over, John Henry went home and told his wife that he had a queer feeling in his head. She prepared his supper, and immediately after eating, he went to bed. The next morning, when his wife awoke and told him it was time to get up, she received no answer, and she immediately realized that he had died sometime during the night. His body was examined by two doctors from Baltimore, who discovered that his death was caused by a burst blood vessel in his head.

Tell It Back—**Narration**

Without looking at the text, retell *The Legend of John Henry* as best as you remember it using your own words. Try not to leave out any important details.

Here is the beginning of the narrative to help you get started:

John Henry was the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. He was the only man who could drive steel with two hammers, one in each hand. People came from miles around to watch him drive steel with his two twenty-pound hammers.

Talk About It—

TE 1. What parts of this story could you attack or refute? There is no right or wrong answer, but you should be able to support your opinion.

TE 2. What parts of this story could you defend or confirm?

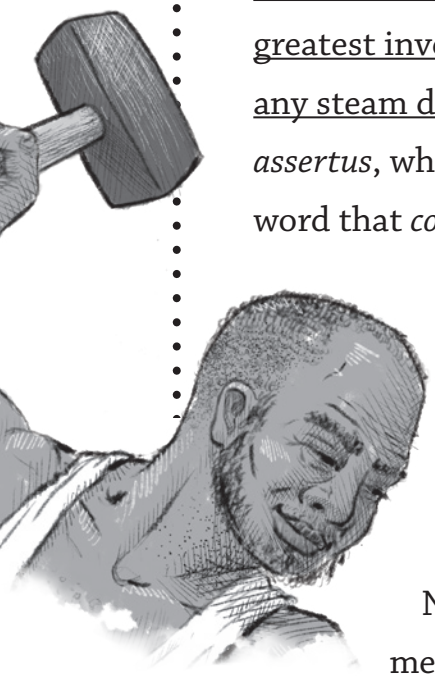
TE 3. In 1996, world chess champion Garry Kasparov played against the computer Deep Blue and beat it four games to two. In a rematch in 1997, however, the computer ultimately beat Kasparov because the chess player's nervousness caused his performance to weaken. Compare and contrast this story from real life with John Henry's legend. How is it similar or not similar?

Go Deeper—

1. As you already know, a legend is a story that gets exaggerated by storytellers over time. Which particular details of the John Henry story seem somewhat exaggerated?

Sample answer: The weight of his hammers and the depth of the holes he drilled might be exaggerated.

2. <u>When the companies met, everyone asserted that the steam drill was the greatest invention ever, but John Henry claimed, "I can sink more steel than any steam drill ever could."</u> The word "assert" comes from the Latin word *assertus*, which means "claim" or "declare." In the following list, circle the word that *could not* be used in place of "assert."



a. announce
b. insist
c. cry
d. proclaim
e. taunt

Teachers: The underlining in this and similar exercises throughout this book is just there to help set it apart from the question students will be answering.

Now use the word "assert" in your own sentence. Make sure that the meaning of the word is clear by the way you use it in the sentence.

Sample sentence: Katie asserted, "Peppermint ice cream is better than chocolate any day of the week."

3. What legendary quality is John Henry best known for?

   a. quiet humility

   b. amazing intelligence

   c. superhuman strength

   d. caring thoughtfulness

Writing Time—

In this and every other Writing Time section, if you feel that your students need additional practice with dictation, choose a selection from the chapter to dictate to them.

1. **SENTENCE PLAY**—What happens when glass hits a concrete pavement? You guessed it! It breaks into lots of tiny pieces, or fragments. Sentences are like glass. They can also be broken into many tiny pieces.

   In writing, a **fragment** is a sentence that is incomplete. Fragments lack at least one essential part of a sentence. For example, "I jumped excitedly on the trampoline" is a complete sentence. "I jumped excitedly on" is a fragment. (Using grammatical lingo, this is because the preposition "on" is missing a direct object.) "Jumped excitedly on the trampoline" is also a fragment because it lacks a subject.

   Be a fragment magician! Use your word magic to fix the following fragments by turning them into complete sentences.

   Example:

   Fragment: John Henry was the best steel driver. On the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

   Complete: John Henry was the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

   Note that the period improperly divides the sentence. The fragment begins with the preposition "on."

   Fragment: John Henry the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

   Complete: John Henry <u>was</u> the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.

   Notice that the fragment in this case is missing the verb "was."

A. Fragment: I'll hammer myself to death. Before I let this steam drill beat me.

Complete: _____

Sample sentence: I'll hammer myself to death before I let this steam drill beat me.

_____

B. Fragment: John Henry had to go to bed. Because he got sick.

Complete: _____

Sample sentence: John Henry had to go to bed because he got sick.

_____

C. Fragment: John Henry had a little.

Complete: _____

Sample sentence: John Henry had a little baby.

_____

D. Fragment: John Henry up on the mountain.

Complete: _____

Sample sentence: John Henry went up on the mountain.

_____

E. Fragment: John Henry drove his fourteen feet. And the steam drill only made nine.

Complete: _____

Sample sentence: John Henry drove his fourteen feet, and the steam drill only made nine.

_____

2. **COPIOUSNESS**—As you'll recall, an adjective is a word that describes a noun.

A. Examine the statue of John Henry by Charles Cooper. List five adjectives that describe John Henry as depicted by the sculptor.

Sample adjectives: strong, bold, determined, fierce, muscular, tough, brawny, solid, gritty, firm

▲ Statue of John Henry by Charles Cooper

B. Adjectives can be strung together and separated by commas. For example: "The bright, sparkling, beautiful stars twinkled in the night sky."
The following sentence would be more interesting with adjectives:

<u>The person of John Henry is captured by this statue.</u>

Rewrite the sentence, stringing together three adjectives to describe the person of John Henry. Keep in mind that the noun you are describing is "person."

The _ Sample adjectives: strong, bold, fierce __, _____, _____ person of John Henry is captured by this statue.

C. The following sentences are taken from folklore studies of John Henry. Rewrite the sentences by adding one or two adjectives to describe each of the underlined nouns.

Example: Now, John Henry was a <u>hero</u>, but he's long dead.
Change to: Now, John Henry was a <u>towering</u>, <u>famous</u> hero, but he's long dead.

a. John Henry often said his <u>strength</u> was brought from Africa.

Sample sentence: John Henry often said his remarkable, superhuman strength was brought from Africa.

b. The <u>crowd</u> that remained through the race at the tunnel was estimated at 2,500 people.

Sample sentence: The large, rowdy crowd that remained through the race at the tunnel was estimated at 2,500 people.

c. John Henry met a <u>black bear</u> and didn't do nothin' but shoot him with his bow and arrow.

Sample sentence: John Henry met a huge, roaring black bear and didn't do nothin' but shoot him with his bow and arrow.

D. Adjectives can lose their charm when too many are used. Although sometimes appropriate, three adjectives together are more than likely too many! In addition, not every noun in a sentence should have an adjective. You should only use an adjective when you want to emphasize one or two nouns in particular.

In the following sentences, label all of the adjectives with "ADJ." Then subtract some adjectives from these sentences and rewrite them, leaving only <u>two</u> behind in each sentence.

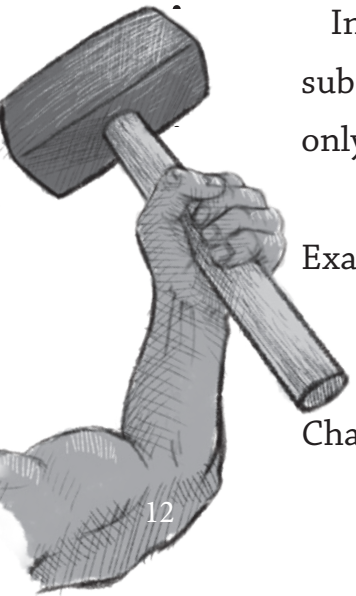
ADJ ADJ ADJ

Example: The extraordinary, fascinating tale of the brawny John Henry is

ADJ ADJ

enthralling and legendary. (5 adjectives)

Change to: The extraordinary tale of John Henry is enthralling.



a. Just like magnificent, powerful Samson, John Henry could have killed a scary, toothy, bloodthirsty lion with his bare hands. (6 adjectives)

Sample sentence: Just like Samson, John Henry could have killed a bloodthirsty lion with his bare hands.

b. Because of nice, generous Johnny Appleseed, children in Ohio enjoyed crunchy, juicy, tangy apples every beautiful, crisp fall. (7 adjectives)

Sample sentence: Because of Johnny Appleseed, children in Ohio enjoyed crunchy, tangy apples every fall.

c. You could recognize dear old Johnny Appleseed by his holey, threadbare, beat-up shoes. (5 adjectives)

You could recognize Johnny Appleseed by his holey, threadbare shoes.

3. **AMPLIFICATION**—The story of John Henry is very short, and many details could be added to make it more interesting. Adding details to narratives or any form of writing is called **amplification**. Amplify the legend in the following ways.

A. Dialogue—As you learned in *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative I*, dialogue is one of the best ways to extend or amplify a story because it helps the reader to know what the characters are thinking.

When you write dialogue, don't forget to use quotation marks to properly punctuate your writing. Quotation marks are like a fence, enclosing what is being said.

There are several places within a sentence that you can identify the speaker: beginning, middle, and end.

- Beginning: John Henry said, "Captain, bet yo' last red cent on me, for I'll beat it to the bottom or I'll die."
- Middle: "Captain," John Henry said, "bet yo' last red cent on me, for I'll beat it to the bottom or I'll die."
- End: "Captain, bet yo' last red cent on me, for I'll beat it to the bottom or I'll die," John Henry said.

Create a dialogue between two people who are watching the race between man and machine. The first person thinks the steam drill will win, but the second person is rooting for John Henry.

John Henry was the best steel driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. He was the only man who could drive steel with two hammers, one in each hand. People came from miles around to watch him drive steel with his two twenty-pound hammers.

Two different railroad companies were meeting in a place called Big Bend Tunnel. One company had a steam drill, while the other used manpower to drill. When the two companies met, everyone asserted that the steam drill was the greatest invention ever, but John Henry claimed, "I can sink more steel than any steam drill ever could." A contest was arranged along with a monetary prize. John Henry could win $100 for beating the steam drill.

One observer said, "_____
_____
_____
_____
_____."

Sample dialogue:

One observer said, "John Henry is a fool for takin' on such a machine! You can't stand against progress. He has no chance of winnin' that hundred dollars."

A second observer said, "I'm bettin' on Henry. After all, ain't you heard he killed a black bear with nothing but his bare hands? He's an extraordinary fellow who's about to come into a fortune."

(continued on next page)

A second observer said, "_____

"We'll see about that," said the first observer. "A steam drill has the power of a dozen men."

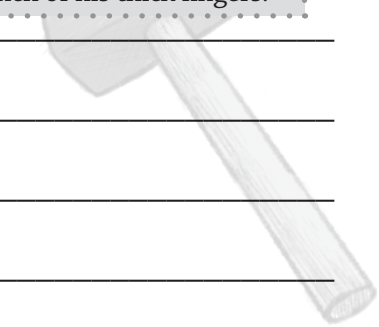
The second observer laughed. "John Henry ain't an ordinary man. Look, he's onto his second hole!"

"Well, I'll be! So he is. I don't believe it!" shouted the first observer.

_____."

B. Description of a person—As you learned in *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative I*, description is another great way to extend or amplify a story. How would you describe John Henry if you saw him standing in your classroom? Be sure to give lots of specific details.

Sample description: John Henry was an extraordinary specimen of manhood. He stood a full seven feet tall and was made up of pure muscle and brawn. His red eyes smoked when he got angry, and his thick black hair fell across his broad forehead like waves on a beach of dark sand. He looked as if he could crush stone with a slight pinch of his thick fingers.



C. Detailed action—<u>They were to drill for thirty-five minutes. When the contest was over, John Henry had drilled two holes seven feet deep, which was a total of fourteen feet.</u> I don't know about you, but I'm a little disappointed by this narrative. The contest is the most exciting part of the story, and yet the details of it are left out by the storyteller. Anton Chekov said, "Don't tell me the moon is shining, show me the glint of light on broken glass." In other words, show the scene. Don't merely tell about it. Use your senses—sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing—where appropriate to capture the action.

Pretend you are the next storyteller to tell the tale of John Henry. What details would you add to make the contest come alive and seem even more legendary and exaggerated? Picture a man with two sledgehammers driv-

ing steel pins into hard granite. What would the noise be like? What would it do to the mountain? Would sparks fly? In exercise B, you described the central character of the legend. This time describe the central action.

Sample paragraph: John Henry's drilling was so loud that it could be heard in far-off Alaska. The mountain shook and smoked like a volcano as those twin hammers smote its rocky ribs. He struck and struck and struck again, until sparks flew, and the fires at his feet had to be put out with river water. After losing the contest, the steam drill operator flung himself to the ground and cried like a baby.

Speak It—

Alone or in a group, give a dramatic reading of the following selections adapted from *The Ballad of John Henry*.

You may want to divide the ballad into parts so that one student reads for the captain, one reads for John Henry, and one is the narrator.

Captain says to John Henry,
"Gonna bring me a steam drill 'round,
Gonna take that steam drill out on the job,
Gonna **wop** that steel on down,
Lawd, lawd, gonna wop that steel on down."

John Henry told his captain,
Lightning was in his eye:
"Captain, bet yo' last red cent on me,
For I'll beat it to the bottom or I'll die,
Lawd, lawd, I'll beat it to the bottom or I'll die."

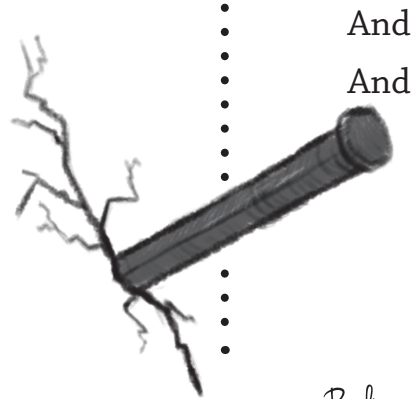
Sun shined hot and burnin',
Weren't no breeze at all,
Sweat ran down like water down a hill,
That day John Henry let his hammer fall,
Lawd, Lawd, that day John Henry let his hammer fall.

John Henry started on the right hand,
The steam drill started on the left—
"Before I'd let this steam drill beat me down,
I'd hammer myself to death,
Lawd, lawd, I'd hammer myself to death."

Oh, the captain said to John Henry,
"I believe this mountain's sinking in."
John Henry said to the captain, "Oh, my!"
Ain't nothing but my hammer suckin' wind,
Ain't nothing but my hammer suckin' wind."

Captain asked John Henry,
"What is that storm I hear?"
He says, "Cap'n that ain't no storm,
'Tain't nothing but my hammer in the air,
Nothing but my hammer in the air."

John Henry was hammering on the mountain,
And his hammer was strikin' fire,
He drove so hard till he broke his poor heart,
And he lied down his hammer and he died,
And he lied down his hammer and he died."



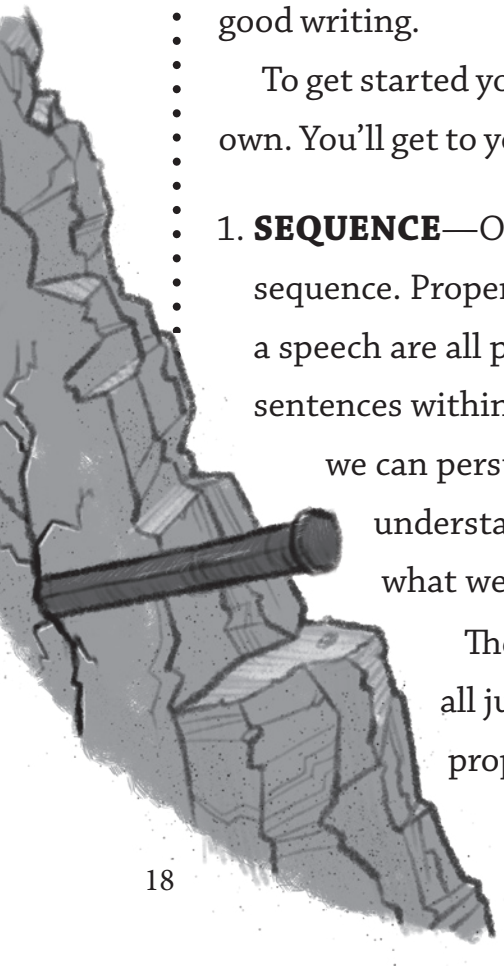
Revise It—

Welcome to the all-new Revise It section of Writing & Rhetoric. Did you know that the best writing is almost always rewritten? It's true. Author Ernest Hemingway said that he rewrote the ending to his novel *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times before he was satisfied. Thirty-nine! Truly good writing comes from rewriting.

If you skip the revision stage of writing, you skip the most satisfying part. I'm certainly not saying that rewriting is easy. It can be hard work at times, but you will also experience the thrill of doing a better job, a more exciting, compelling job.

By the end of this book I anticipate that you will see your writing differently. I hope that you will see your first writing as only a first step rather than the final composition. As you revise your work, there are plenty of questions you can and should ask yourself. Does this make sense? Is this in the best sequence possible? Does every paragraph have a strong topic sentence? Are my nouns, verbs, and adjectives vivid? Do all of my subjects and verbs agree? Revision is not simply proofreading for spelling and punctuation errors. It is reading for all aspects of good writing.

To get started you're going to work on somebody else's writing instead of your own. You'll get to your own work in the not-so-distant future.



1. **SEQUENCE**—One of the most important aspects of good writing is sequence. Proper sequence means that the parts of a story, an essay, or a speech are all placed in an order that makes sense. This is true for the sentences within a paragraph as well as the paragraphs within a story. Before we can persuade people, we need to be clearly understood. If people don't understand our writing, they will certainly not be convinced that what we have to say has any soundness.

   The following paragraphs from *The Legend of John Henry* are all jumbled up. Use numbers 1 through 4 to put the story in its proper sequence.

___2___ Two different railroad companies were meeting in a place called Big Bend Tunnel. One company had a steam drill, while the other used manpower to drill. When the two companies met, everyone asserted that the steam drill was the greatest invention ever, but John Henry claimed, "I can sink more steel than any steam drill ever could." A contest was arranged along with a monetary prize. John Henry could win $100 for beating the steam drill.

___3___ John Henry had his foreman buy him two new twenty-pound hammers for the race. They were to drill for thirty-five minutes. When the contest was over, John Henry had drilled two holes seven feet deep, which was a total of fourteen feet. The steam drill had only drilled one hole nine feet deep, so the prize was given to John Henry.

___1___ John Henry was the best driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. He was the only man who could drive steel with two hammers, one in each hand. People came from miles around to watch him drive steel with his two twenty-pound hammers.

___4___ When the race was over, John Henry went home and told his wife that he had a queer feeling in his head. She prepared his supper, and immediately after eating, he went to bed. The next morning, when his wife awoke and told him it was time to get up, she received no answer, and she immediately realized that he had died sometime during the night. His body was examined by two doctors from Baltimore, who discovered that his death was caused by a burst blood vessel in his head.

2. **PROOFREADING**—Most people need to put their writing down, get away from it, and then see it later with "fresh eyes." That's always very helpful for catching mistakes, both small and large. Checking your writing for mistakes is called **proofreading**.

Please note: Looking for mistakes—proofreading—is a good final step in revising your work, but keep in mind that it is not the first step! You need to take care of bigger issues such as sequence before you take care of smaller issues such as improper punctuation.

There are many types of proofreading marks, but the four that follow are some of the most common.

This symbol means you should capitalize the letter—change it from lowercase to uppercase.

This mark is called a caret. It means "insert something here." You might be missing a word or proper punctuation.

This mark means "please delete." Think of it as an X through the word or words.

When you find a word circled and this symbol in the margin, the word has been misspelled.

Now practice putting these symbols to use by marking up the following paragraph, which contains eight errors.

Johnny Appleseed became his right name if men are rightly named from their works. Wherever he went he carried a store of appel seeds with him, and when he came to a good clear spot on the bank of a stream, he planted his ~~seeds~~ seeds. He soon had hundreds of these little nurseries throughout ohio, which he returned year after year to watch and tend. When the trees were large enough he sold them the farmirs for a trifle. He went barefoot in the warm weather, and in winter he wore cast-off shoes; when he could get none, and the ways were very rough, he protected his feet with rude sandals of his own making. He dwelt close to the heart of ~~of~~ nature, whose dumb children he would not wound or kill, even poisonous snakes or noxious insects. The indians knew him and loved him for the goodness of his life.

–from *Stories of Ohio* by William Dean Howells

Lesson 1: Believe It or Not

Talk About It—

1. John Henry's superhuman strength is an unbelievable aspect of the story, but I enjoy legends in which the hero is super strong. What troubles me more is John Henry's pride. I find it unbelievable that he would ruin his health and destroy his life just to defeat a machine in a race.
2. Being replaced by a machine can be a frustrating experience for a person. John Henry's desire to outwork a machine is believable because people will often fight to keep their jobs if they feel that they are being threatened. Sometimes they will even make unrealistic claims in order to do so, just as John Henry did. The fact that John Henry died after the contest is also believable, because the human body isn't made to withstand that type of exertion.
3. The stories are similar because both involve a competition between a man and a machine. The stories' endings are different; in real life, the machine ultimately beat the man, but in legend the man beat the machine. Also, John Henry was confident in his strength, whereas Kasparov's nervousness caused him to fail. (However, John Henry still failed in the end because he died from the hard work of the competition.)

Of all forms of writing, we encounter expository writing the most—in online news, in textbooks, in magazines, and on cereal boxes. Throughout this book, students will sharpen skills in expository writing, including:

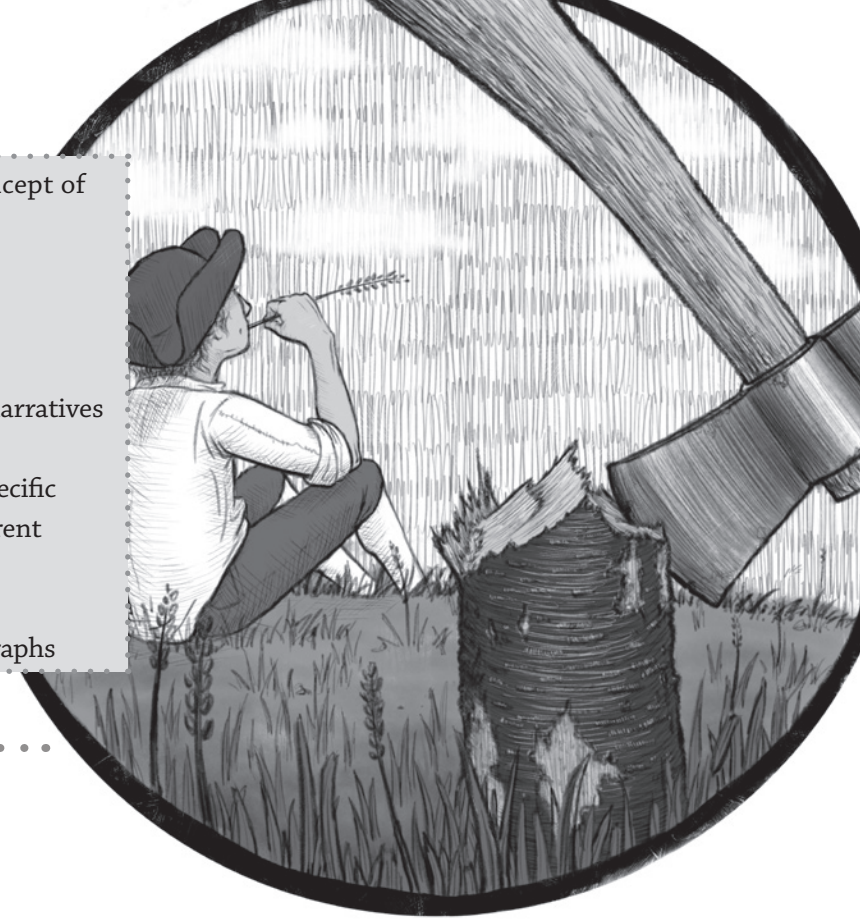
- introducing and concluding the main topic
- summary
- use of narrative to capture interest and further the purpose of exposition
- establishing position (or opinion)
- working with paragraphs

Notes

The purpose of this lesson is to review the concept of narratives.

In this lesson, students will practice:

- oral narration
- critical thinking
- distinguishing between narratives and non-narratives
- identifying and fixing sentence fragments
- making adjectives, nouns, and verbs more specific
- summarizing and retelling a story from different points of view
- impromptu speaking
- properly sequencing and proofreading paragraphs



Lesson 2

Narrative Review

Before you move along to refutations and confirmations, you need to get cozy with narratives again. I wish that meant you could have a nice warm cup of narrative tea and a soft, fuzzy narrative blanket, but that's not how it works. By getting cozy with narratives, I mean that you need to be very familiar with how narratives work.

Telling your own narratives, as well as being familiar with the great narratives of civilization, is a vital part of rhetoric. Both can serve as illustrations in your writing and speeches. You've learned a lot about narratives over the time that you have studied writing and rhetoric, and in this lesson you will review what you have learned.

Do you remember what a narrative is? In *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative II* you learned that "narrative" is a fancy word for "story." "To narrate" means "to tell" and comes from the Latin word *narrare*, which also means "to tell." So if you're telling a story, you're also narrating a narrative.

There are a lot of stories to be heard and read, but not all of them are great stories. Not so long ago, a famous teen singer was in the news after being arrested for recklessly racing his car on a city street. Of course, this drag race could have accidentally killed anyone trying to cross to the other side of the street. As if that wasn't bad enough, this young singer had apparently been drinking alcohol before climbing behind the wheel. Now, there's probably a decent fable in this story if we were to make the teen a reckless, conceited talking toad such as Mr. Toad from the *The Wind in the Willows*. However, most of the stories you read in this series aren't about the latest news headlines. They are stories that have been with us for generations and have stood the test of time. Singers and movie stars come and go, but the great stories are here to stay.

There are two major types of narratives: fiction and nonfiction. Imaginative stories, not usually based on **fact**, are generally called **fiction**. Factual stories, not usually based on the storyteller's imagination, are called **nonfiction**. For example, an imagined story about a horse, such as *Black Beauty* or *Misty of Chincoteague*, would be considered fiction. A history of a real horse, such as the story of Man o' War or Secretariat, would be nonfiction.

So what makes a story a story? Do you remember what every story has in common? Every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In other words, narratives contain an order of events like a timeline.

Here's a delicious way you could illustrate a story timeline: Think about baking a gooey, mouthwatering chocolate cake. The beginning of your chocolate cake story is when you make the batter. You must crack eggs, add milk, whisk in flour, melt the chocolate, and so on. The batter goes into greased pans, the pans go in the oven, and you set the timer. Now you're ready for the middle of the story, right?

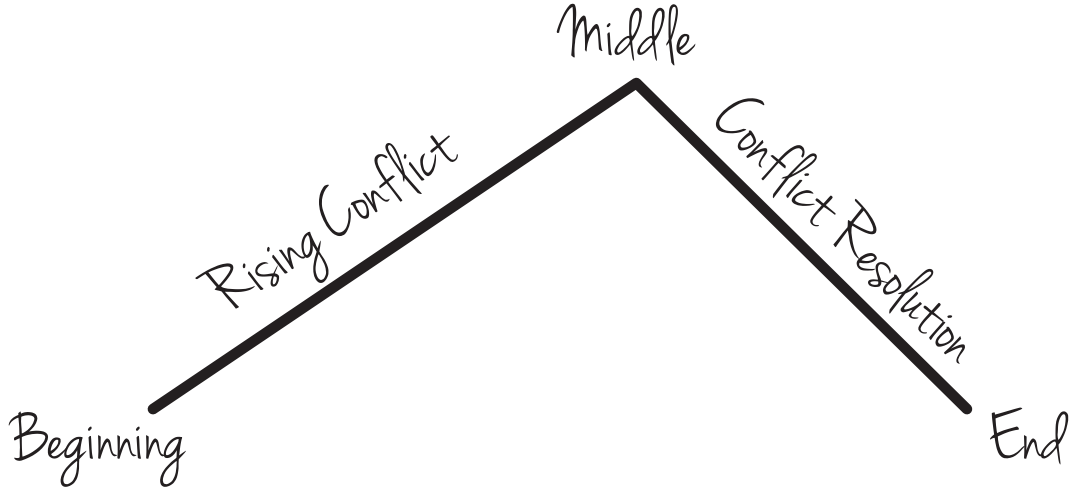
Right! You could sit by the oven and watch the cake bake for thirty minutes—that could be the middle of your story. However, story middles are most interesting with conflict. **Conflict** is a clash between people or ideas. When we don't easily get what we want, when our goals are thwarted time and time again, we call this

conflict. So say that, while you're sitting in the kitchen and watching your cake bake, a motorcycle gang comes along and demands to know the cake recipe. Of course, the recipe is an old family secret and you refuse to tell. The motorcycle gang grabs you and drives you into the desert toward their hideout, where they plan to hold you for ransom for Grandma's cake recipe. Luckily, you escape in a low-flying helicopter that happened to have a rope ladder dangling from its cockpit. Just when you think you're safe, the chopper plunges into the ocean and you're forced to swim to shore with a pack of sharks at your tail.

Now that's a story middle! Did you notice how the series of events built toward the peak of the action of the story? That's what we would call **rising conflict**—things just get worse and worse for you. Of course, you don't want to simply go from one conflict to another without an ending. You want to get back home and pull the chocolate cake out of the oven, remember? So in your story middle you must also resolve your conflicts. That is, you must settle your problems somehow. I think it would be a great resolution to the problem of the motorcycle gang if the sharks ate all of the bikers.

So now you are ready for the ending. Tired, worn-out, cut, and bruised, you slog back into your kitchen. Lo and behold, you find the cake already frosted and ready to eat! You thank your mother for finishing the cake, take one bite of it, and fall asleep on the kitchen floor.

Together these three parts of a story—beginning, middle, and end—create what we call the **plot**, or plan, of the story. The plot creates a sense of order, of starting in one place and ending at a different place.



You also learned that every story has characters. You probably have some favorite characters that mean so much to you that they seem like friends—or at least you wish they were friends! The characters we love have been created so well that they seem like us, like people we know or with whom we have lived and worked. That is why characters are able to teach us about ourselves and about life—because many of them are taken from life.

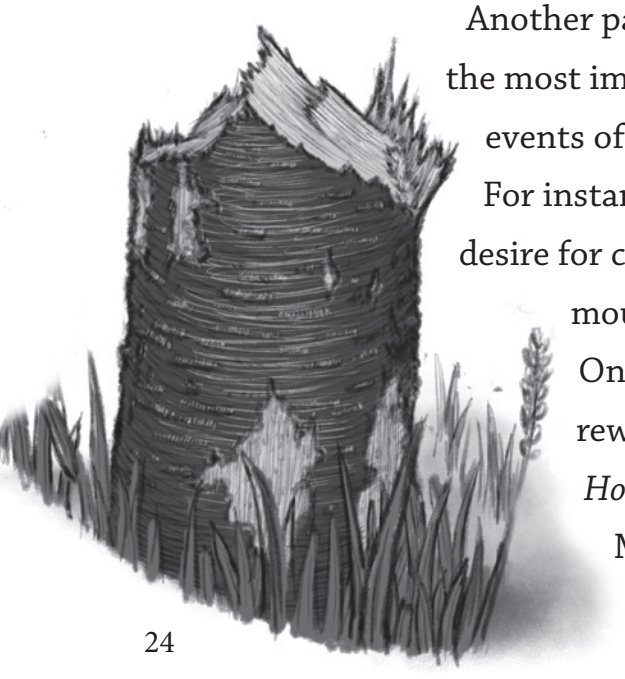
Think of any story and you will immediately think of the persons in the story. King Arthur, Queen Guinevere, and Sir Lancelot are some of the main characters of the legends of Camelot. Aladdin, the princess, the African magician, and the genie are all important characters in *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*. As you can see in the case of the genie, a character need not be a human being.

The characters of a story make the story interesting. How interesting would *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* be without Charlie? Or Willy Wonka? How interesting would *Anne of Green Gables* be without Anne Shirley? The persons of a story—the characters—make a story fun to read.

TE ▶ Name some of the characters in *Treasure Island* or another story you know well.

TE ▶ Name some of the characters in the story of Joseph in Egypt from the Hebrew Scriptures or another book you know well.

TE ▶ Can you think of a story without characters?



Another part of a narrative is its **main idea**. The main idea is the most important thought or message in the story. All the events of the story add up to create or support a main idea. For instance, in the novel *The Hobbit*, a character who has no desire for change and adventure is forced to go on a quest across mountains and forests to defeat a fire-breathing dragon. One of the main ideas of this story is that there is a reward to taking appropriate risks. In the case of *The Hobbit*, the hero of the story wins a huge stash of gold. More importantly, he gains a broader sense of the big

world and realizes that he doesn't have to be afraid of it. All of the challenges that he faced throughout the book were leading him toward those rewards. We love the fact that stories have meaning and that everything that happens in them contributes to their meaning.

So now you've reviewed what you learned before, that all narratives must have a plot and that they must also contain persons or characters, and you've learned that stories have meaning and a main idea.

TE ▶ The following stories tell two versions of the same incident. One is a narrative and the other is not. Can you tell the difference?

George Washington and His Hatchet

—from *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* by James Baldwin

Version 1

When George Washington was quite a little boy, his father gave him a hatchet. It was bright and new, and George took great delight in going about and chopping things with it. He ran into the garden, and there he saw a tree which seemed to say to him, "Come and cut me down!"

George had often seen his father's men chop down the great trees in the forest, and he thought that it would be fine sport to see this tree fall with a crash to the ground. So he set to work with his little hatchet, and, as the tree was a very small one, it did not take long to lay it low.

Soon after that, his father came home.

"Who has been cutting my fine young cherry tree?" he cried. "It was the only tree of its kind in this country, and it cost me a great deal of money."

He was very angry when he came into the house.

"If I only knew who killed that cherry tree," he cried, "I would—yes, I would—"

"Father!" cried little George. "I will tell you the truth about it. I chopped the tree down with my hatchet."

His father forgot his anger.

"George," he said, and he took the little fellow in his arms, "George, I am glad that you told me about it. I would rather lose a dozen cherry trees than that you should tell one falsehood."

Version 2

In the colony of Virginia, "George" was a common name. The name "George Washington" belonged to a boy in the Potomac River region near the town of Alexandria.

Cherry trees are very useful trees. They produce sweet, red fruit in season, and their wood is lovely for making furniture. In the days of colonial America, cherry trees were rare and highly prized. Sadly, sometimes cherry trees are accidentally chopped down by little boys, and it is possible that George Washington cut one down.

Tell It Back—**Narration**

Without looking at the text, retell *George Washington and His Hatchet* as best as you remember it using your own words. Try not to leave out any important details.

Here is the beginning of the narrative to help you get started:

When George Washington was quite a little boy, his father gave him a hatchet. It was bright and new, and George took great delight in going about chopping things with it.

Talk About It—

TE

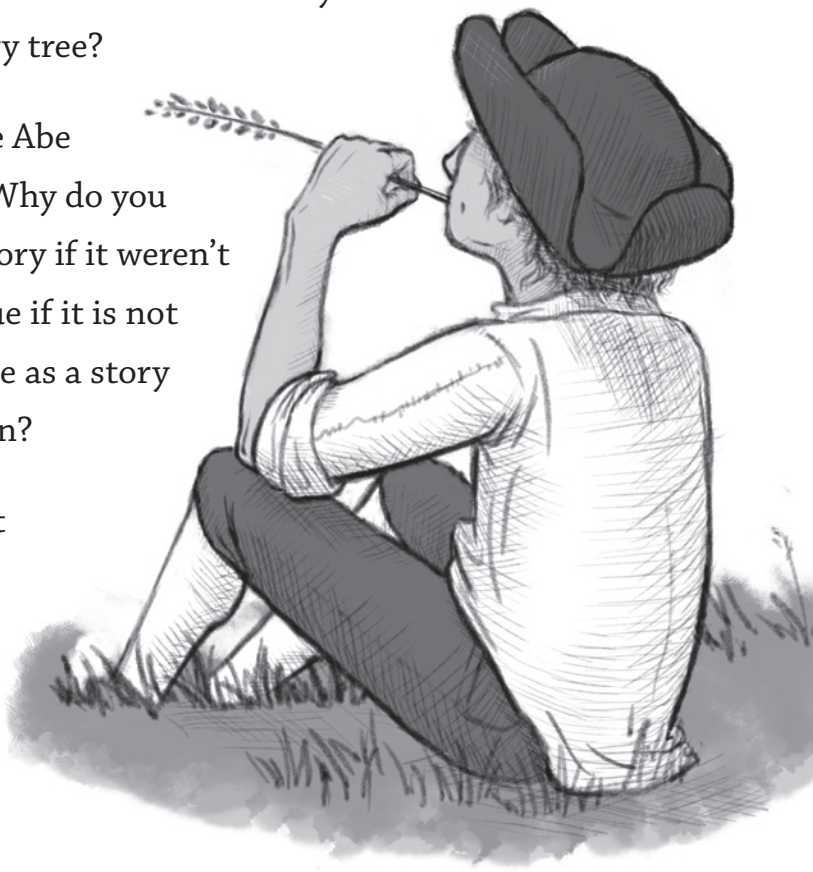
1. What do you think about the character of George Washington in this story? What might be considered untrustworthy about his actions? What might be trustworthy about his response to his father?

TE 2. What is the main idea of the story? Do you agree with it? Have you ever learned from an event in your own life that taught you the same lesson?

TE 3. Americans seem to love stories about honesty. Another cherished story, this time about Abe Lincoln, our sixteenth president, has been passed down from generation to generation. The following is the story in a nutshell:

> One day a woman bought a bill of goods in Offutt's store amounting to something over two dollars. She paid Abe the money and went away satisfied. That night, on going over the sales of the day, Abe found that he had charged the woman six and one-fourth cents too much. After closing the store, though it was late, he could not go home to supper or to bed till he had restored that sixpence to its proper owner. She lived more than two miles away, but that did not matter to Abe Lincoln. When he had returned the money to the astonished woman he walked back to the village with a long step and a light heart, content with doing his duty.
>
> —from *The Story of Young Abraham Lincoln* by Wayne Whipple

How is this story similar to and different from the story about George Washington and the cherry tree?



TE 4. We don't know whether or not the Abe Lincoln story is true or made up. Why do you think Americans would tell this story if it weren't true? Does the story have any value if it is not true? In other words, does its value as a story change if it did not actually happen?

TE 5. Why is honesty such an important quality in a leader? Why do you suppose Americans want to have honest presidents?

▲Engraving of George Washington and his father by John C. McRae

TE 6. Examine the engraving of George Washington and his father by John C. McRae. Notice that, in the engraving, George did not cut down the whole tree and his father does not look angry. Why do you think McRae portrayed the story this way?

Go Deeper—

Beside each of the following selections write "narrative" or "non-narrative." Remember that a narrative is a story. All narratives must have a beginning, a middle, and an end—a plot. They must also contain characters. Non-narratives may give good information and may contain lovely descriptions, but the two essential elements of story—plot and characters—are missing.

Be aware that non-narratives can be one of two types: fact-telling or lyric poetry. Deciding which poems are narrative and which are lyric (non-narrative) can be tricky. Many poems are by definition lyric—that is, song-like or highly musical—and tend to be short. Some poems may have narrative elements but are still lyric poems. For the purposes of this exercise, we will not teach the distinction between a lyric or narrative poem and will just draw the students' attention to whether or not the piece of writing has characters and a plot that develops.

1. _ narrative _____

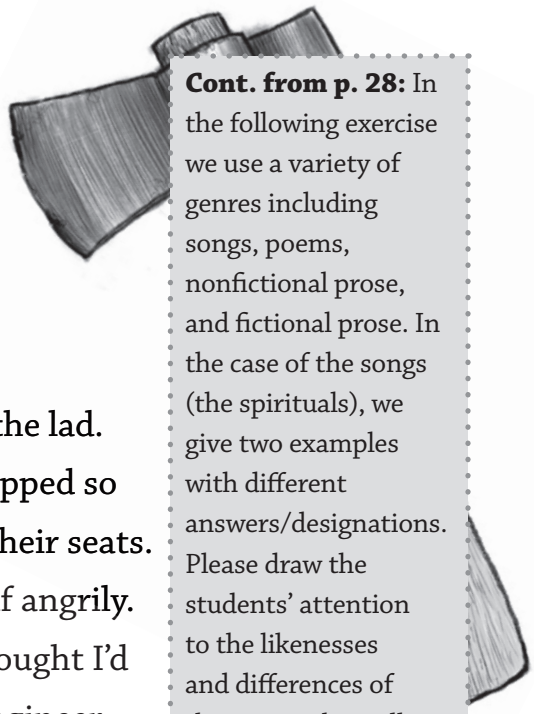
Without stopping to think, the boy pulled off his coat and ran swiftly along the tracks to meet the train. He swung his coat wildly above his head and shouted with all his might. But who could hear his voice above the rumble and roar of the great express? The engineer saw the lad. He threw on the emergency brakes. The train stopped so quickly that the passengers were thrown out of their seats. "What's the matter, boy?" cried the engineer, half angrily. "Wash—out—down there. Track—caved in—thought I'd tell you," gasped the boy, all out of breath. The engineer leaped from the cab, and running forward a few paces was horrified to see the danger his train had escaped.

—from *An American Book of Golden Deeds* by James Baldwin

2. _ narrative _____

When Israel was in Egypt's land
Let my people go;
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.
The Lord told Moses what to do
Let my people go;
To lead the children of Israel through,
Let my people go.
"Thus spoke the Lord" bold Moses said,
Let my people go;
If not I'll smite your firstborn dead,
Let my people go.
They journeyed on at his command,
Let my people go;
And came at length to Canaan's land,
Let my people go.

—"Go Down Moses," an African American spiritual



Cont. from p. 28: In the following exercise we use a variety of genres including songs, poems, nonfictional prose, and fictional prose. In the case of the songs (the spirituals), we give two examples with different answers/designations. Please draw the students' attention to the likenesses and differences of these two; this will help students to recognize what is a genre difference (song, poem, nonfiction prose, fictional prose) and what is a categorical difference (narrative, non-narrative).

This powerful African American spiritual uses a form of singing called "call and response." Although technically not a ballad, it tells the most important plot points of the Moses story in numerous stanzas.

3. non-narrative

Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham.
Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham.
Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham.
Oh, rock-a my soul.

His love is so high you can't get over it,
So low you can't get under it,
So wide you can't get around it.
You must go in at the door.

—"Rock-a My Soul," an African American spiritual

4. non-narrative

A wounded animal itself is less dangerous than chasing the animal on horseback. The prairie does not always present a smooth, level, and uniform surface. The most formidable obstructions are the burrows of wild animals. In the blindness of the chase the hunter rushes over it unconscious of danger; his horse, at full career, thrusts his leg deep into one of the burrows; the bone snaps, the rider is hurled forward to the ground and probably killed.

—adapted from *The Works of Francis Parkman*

5. narrative

Listen my children and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm.

—"Paul Revere's Ride" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

6. non-narrative _____

An emerald is as green as grass,
A ruby red as blood;
A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;
A flint lies in the mud.
A diamond is a brilliant stone,
To catch the world's desire;
An opal holds a fiery spark;
But a flint holds fire.

—"Flint" by Christina Rossetti

7. non-narrative _____

Soon as the sun forsook the eastern main
The pealing thunder shook the heav'nly plain;
Majestic grandeur! From the zephyr's wing,
Exhales the incense of the blooming spring.
Soft purl the streams, the birds renew their notes,
And through the air their mingled music floats.
Through all the heav'ns what beauteous dies are spread!
But the west glories in the deepest red:
So may our breasts with ev'ry virtue glow,
The living temples of our God below!
Fill'd with the praise of him who gives the light,
And draws the sable curtains of the night,
Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
At morn to wake more heav'nly, more refin'd;
So shall the labours of the day begin
More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.
Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
Then cease, my song, till fair Aurora rise.

—"An Hymn to the Evening" by Phillis Wheatley

8. narrative

Next day Amy was rather late at school, but could not resist the temptation of displaying, with pardonable pride, a moist brown-paper parcel, before she consigned it to the inmost recesses of her desk. During the next few minutes the rumor that Amy March had got twenty-four delicious limes (she ate one on the way) and was going to treat her friends circulated through the class.

—adapted from *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

9. non-narrative

It is generally agreed by travelers, that the flesh of the Bison is little inferior to the beef of our domestic oxen. The tongue is considered a delicacy, and the hump is much esteemed. A kind of potted-beef, called *pemmican*, is made of the flesh of the Bison.

—from *Delineations of the Ox Tribe* by George Vasey

10. narrative

Tom and Becky rose up and wandered along, hand in hand and hopeless. They tried to estimate how long they had been in the cave, but all they knew was that it seemed days and weeks, and yet it was plain that this could not be, for their candles were not gone yet. A long time after this—they could not tell how long—Tom said they must go softly and listen for dripping water. Both were cruelly tired, yet Becky said she thought she could go a little farther.

—from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain

11. narrative

There was a man, who had a goat
He loved that goat, just like a kid.
One day that goat got frisk and fine
Ate three red shirts right off the line.
The man he grabbed him by the back
And tied him to the railroad track
And when the train came into sight
That goat grew pale and green with fright.
He heaved a sigh, as if in pain,
Coughed up those red shirts and flagged the train.

—"The Goat," a folk song

12. non-narrative

The beaver is found chiefly in North America. It is about three and a half feet long, including the flat, paddle-shaped tail, which is a foot in length. The long, shining hair on the back is chestnut-colored, while the fine, soft fur that lies next the skin is grayish brown. Beavers build themselves most curious huts to live in, and quite frequently a great number of these huts are placed close together, like the buildings in a town.

—from "The Beaver" in *McGuffey's Eclectic Reader* by William Holmes McGuffey

Writing Time—

1. **SENTENCE PLAY**—Can you spot the fragments? Some fragments are sentences that are missing essential parts, such as subjects or verbs. Some fragments have punctuation, such as a period, incorrectly placed in the middle of the sentence. In the following exercises, circle any fragments that you see and then correct them by rewriting the sentences in the spaces provided. If the sentence is not a fragment, leave it alone.

Examples:

Fragment: At the early age of seventeen, George Washington a surveyor.

Complete: At the early age of seventeen, George Washington became a surveyor.

In this example, the subject "George Washington" lacks a verb.

Fragment: At the early age of seventeen. George Washington became a surveyor.

Complete: At the early age of seventeen, George Washington became a surveyor.

In this example, the sentence is improperly divided by a period. Replace the period with a comma.

A. George Washington's father was glad. Because his son told the truth.

George Washington's father was glad because his son told the truth.

B. George Washington cut down the cherry tree. Which is why he was grounded for a month.

George Washington cut down the cherry tree, which is why he was grounded for a month.

C. One of Washington's best qualities was his honesty.

This is a complete sentence; no change is needed.

D. During the French and Indian War, George Washington in the Battle of Monongahela.

During the French and Indian War, George Washington fought in the Battle of Monongahela.

E. At Valley Forge, George Washington's troops nearly froze to death.

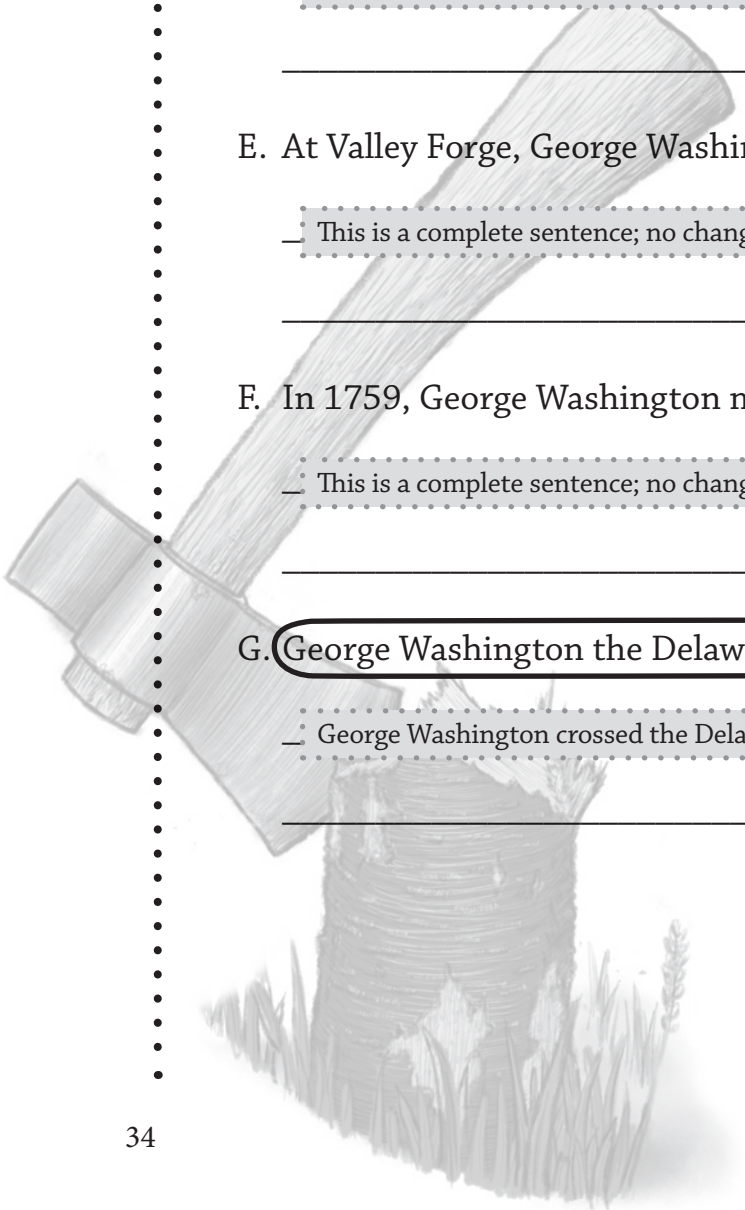
This is a complete sentence; no change is needed.

F. In 1759, George Washington married Martha Custis.

This is a complete sentence; no change is needed.

G. George Washington the Delaware River on Christmas day in 1776.

George Washington crossed the Delaware River on Christmas day in 1776.



2. **COPIOUSNESS**—Sentences become stronger, more vigorous and intense, when specific words are used. This is true whether the word is a noun, an adjective, or a verb. Always search your mind, and sometimes a thesaurus, for the very best word to use.

A. Underline the adjectives in the following sentences and then rewrite the sentences to make the adjectives more specific. The adjective does not need to be a synonym.
Example: Deceiving your father is bad.
Change to: Deceiving your father is wicked.

a. Cherry trees make a nice addition to a nature-lover's backyard.

Sample sentence: Cherry trees make a lovely/useful addition to a nature-lover's backyard.

b. Of all trees, cherry trees are the most pretty.

Sample sentence: Of all trees, cherry trees are the most delicate/prized.

c. George Washington was a good boy for telling the truth.

Sample sentence: George Washington was a wise/honest boy for telling the truth.

d. A hatchet can be a fine tool but should not be used for bad purposes.

Sample sentence: A hatchet can be a convenient/useful tool but should not be used for murderous/foolish purposes.

B. In the following sentences, underline the common nouns—the ordinary names of persons, places, things, and ideas—and replace them with more specific nouns. Do not change the proper nouns, which name a specific person, place, thing, or idea. (For example, a common noun is "girl"; a proper noun is "Stella.")

Example: George Washington lived at <u>home</u>.

Change to: George Washington lived at Mount Vernon.

a. Cutting down his father's <u>plant</u> was an <u>issue.</u>

Sample sentence: Cutting down his father's cherry tree was a mistake.

b. George Washington grew up to become America's first <u>leader.</u>

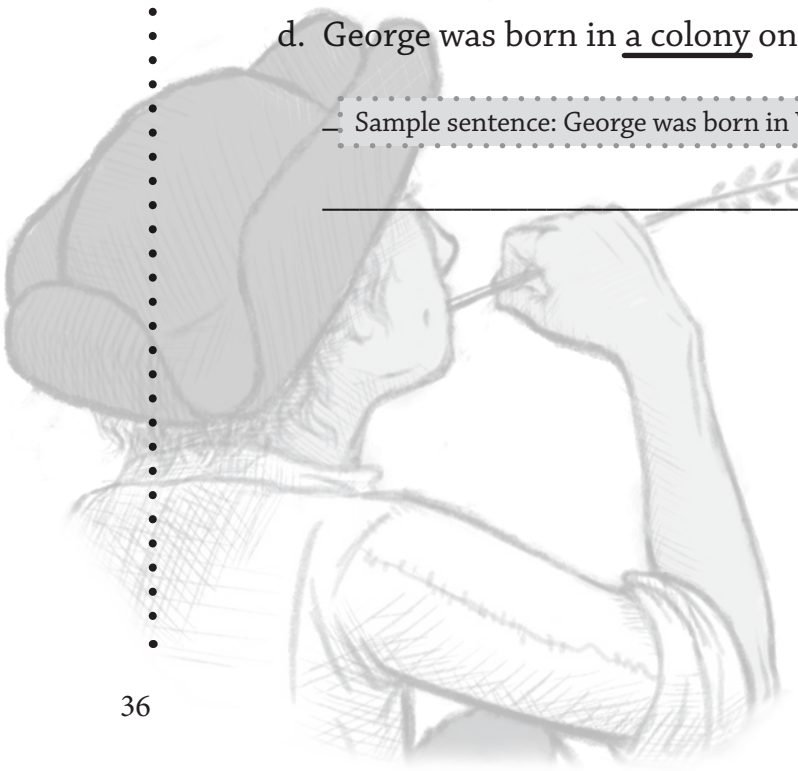
Sample sentence: George Washington grew up to be America's first president.

c. Juicy <u>fruits</u> can be baked into tasty <u>food.</u>

Sample sentence: Juicy cherries can be baked into tasty pies.

d. George was born in <u>a colony</u> on February 22, 1732.

Sample sentence: George was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732.



C. Underline the **state-of-being verbs** in the following sentences and replace them with action verbs. (State-of-being verbs are forms of the verb "to be": is, are, was, were, be, been, and so on.) Change the sentence as needed so that it makes sense.

Example: George is in his father's orchard.

Change to: George wanders in his father's orchard.

In this example, the verb "is" tells us nothing about what George Washington is doing in his father's orchard. Is he walking, skipping, playing, hiding, or something else? An action verb such as "wanders" gives the reader a much more vivid picture.

a. Cherries are delicious with whipped cream.

Sample sentence: Cherries taste delicious with whipped cream.

b. George is truly remorseful as he explains his actions to his father.

Sample sentence: George sounds truly remorseful as he explains his actions to his father.

c. George Washington was in Virginia for most of his life.

Sample sentence: George Washington prospered in Virginia for most of his life.

d. Martha Washington is afraid that epiglottitis will kill George.

Sample sentence: Martha Washington fears that epiglottitis will kill George..

D. Replace the dull nouns, adjectives, and verbs that are underlined in the following sentence to create several new and exciting sentences. The new sentences don't have to have the same meaning as the original.

The sad, sorry boy started to do nicer things after he learned stuff.

Sample sentence: The tearful, remorseful child began to smile after he learned he was forgiven.

Sample sentence: The sorrowful, repentant youth began to behave more courageously after he realized his mistake.

Sample sentence: The unhappy, apologetic son began to make better choices after he recognized his problem.

3. **SUMMARY**—After reading the story of George Washington and the cherry tree again, **summarize** the tale in two or three sentences using your own words. Do you remember how you did this in previous books? First, determine the main idea of the story and then note the important details and words that support it. Often dialogue and description can be cut from a summary. It can be helpful to cross out these extra details.

When George Washington was quite a little boy, his father gave him a hatchet. It was bright and new, and George took great delight in going about and chopping things with it. He ran into the garden, and there he saw a tree which seemed to say to him, "Come and cut me down!"

George had often seen his father's men chop down the great trees in the forest, and he thought that it would be fine sport to see this tree fall with a crash to the ground. So he set to work with his little hatchet, and, as the tree was a very small one, it did not take long to lay it low.

Soon after that, his father came home.

"Who has been cutting my fine young cherry tree?" he cried. "It was the only tree of its kind in this country, and it cost me a great deal of money."

He was very angry when he came into the house.

"If I only knew who killed that cherry tree," he cried, "I would—yes, I would—"

"Father!" cried little George. "I will tell you the truth about it. I chopped the tree down with my hatchet."

His father forgot his anger.

"George," he said, and he took the little fellow in his arms, "George, I am glad that you told me about it. I would rather lose a dozen cherry trees than that you should tell one falsehood."

Sample summary: When George Washington was little, he cut down his father's cherry tree with his new hatchet. His father was angry at first but forgave George after the boy was honest about his mistake.

4. **AMPLIFICATION**—The story *George Washington and His Hatchet* is told in the **third-person** point of view, using the pronouns "he," "she," "it," and "they." Retell the story in the **first-person** point of view, first from George's father Augustine's point of view, and then from George's. Feel free to add thoughts and feelings, as well as description and dialogue. As you learned in previous Writing & Rhetoric books, these are some of the best ways to amplify narratives.

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George had often seen his father's men chop down the great trees in the forest, and he thought that it would be fine sport to see this tree fall with a crash to the ground. So- he set to work with his little hatchet, and, as the tree was a very small one, it did not take long to lay it low.

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"George," he said, and he took the little fellow in his arms, "George, I am glad that you told me about it. I would rather lose a dozen cherry trees than that you should tell one falsehood."

Augustine Washington's Point of View

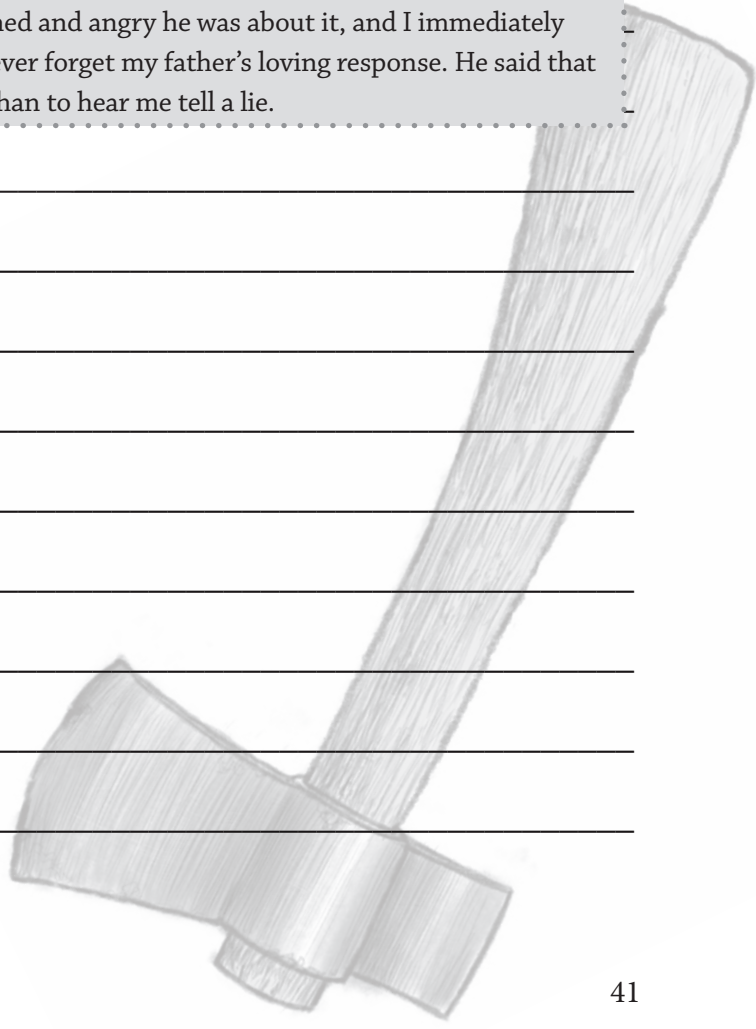
Sample amplification: When my son George was little, I gave him a hatchet for his birthday. It was a pretty little thing and very expensive—almost as expensive as the cherry tree he cut down with it! George loved that hatchet and chopped most everything in sight with it. One day, I found my prize cherry tree toppled over in the garden. I was furious and immediately suspected George. "Who has been cutting my fine young cherry tree?" I demanded. "It was the only tree of its kind in this country, and it cost me a great deal of money." The boy confessed to cutting it almost as soon as I asked him about it, and I forgot my anger as I rejoiced in his honesty.

How does the change in point of view affect the story?

Sample answer: This story is greatly changed when George's father is the one doing the speaking. For one, the story seems more believable, as we often are quicker to trust someone who is telling a story directly from his own life. By hearing about it from Augustine's point of view, we can understand in more detail how this would be a frustrating event in the life of the father. Also, the story has more emotion in it because it is being told from a closer vantage point than that of a distant narrator.

George Washington's Point of View

Sample amplification: When I was a young boy, my father gave me my very own hatchet. I took it everywhere, and nothing gave me more pleasure than to use it on the many growing things in our family garden. One day, I was overcome by what felt like an irresistible temptation to chop down my father's beautiful cherry tree. The minute I did, I was stricken by remorse. I felt even worse when I realized how saddened and angry he was about it, and I immediately apologized and told him the truth. I will never forget my father's loving response. He said that he would rather lose a dozen cherry trees than to hear me tell a lie.



How does the change in point of view affect the story?

Sample answer: This story is changed when it is heard from George's point of view because the reader experiences the emotion in the event more directly, from a closer perspective. In addition, the reader is likely to have sympathy for the character who is speaking and can better see how bad he felt to have done something wrong. From this point of view, we become aware of how much a child wishes for the approval of his parents, and we get a strong sense for the character of the speaker and how his actions affect his conscience.

Speak It—

An **impromptu speech** is a speech given "off the top of one's head," or on the spot. Impromptu speaking is good practice for thinking creatively and speaking without much preparation.

To practice impromptu speaking, reenact the story of George Washington and the cherry tree alone or with a partner. One person can be George and one can be his father. You will do this on the spot, without preparing ahead of time.

1. For the first impromptu speech, do a dramatic acting out of the actual story.

2. During the second impromptu speech, have George accept blame for chopping down the tree and apologize. Then have George make up weak excuses for chopping down the tree. His father can grow progressively more frustrated as he refutes George's excuses. What punishment does he give George?

3. During the third impromptu speech, George can try shifting the blame for chopping down the tree. He can blame his older brother for not watching him better, he can blame his father for giving him the hatchet in the first place, he can blame the ax for being so sharp, etc. He can even blame the cherry tree for being so tempting. In each case, his father should explain why the blame-shifting is pure foolishness. In the end, George's father should explain why telling the truth is important and dole out a punishment much worse than it would have been if George had been honest.

Revise It—

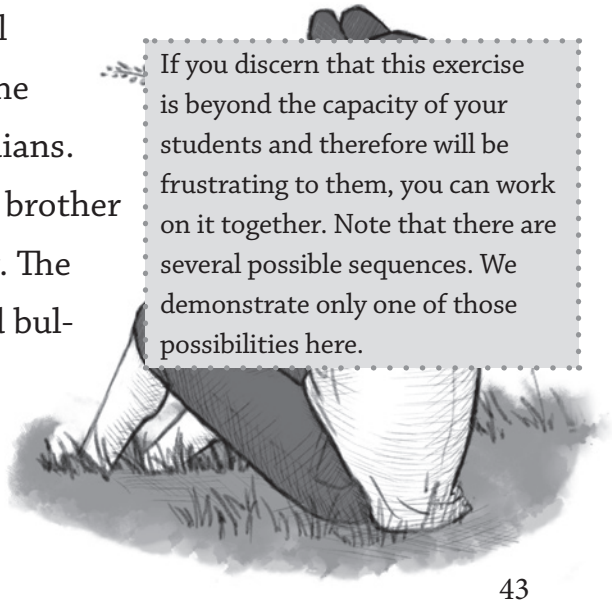
1. **SEQUENCE**—Think for a moment of a dog with its head where its tail should go, its tail where its head should go, and its hind legs and front legs turned in opposite directions. That would not be a dog. That would be a disaster! In the same way, a story that is out of order can be difficult to understand, and if your reader doesn't understand what you are saying, it's hard to make a lasting impact on her. Readers can understand a story best when it is told in chronological fashion, that is, with the beginning first, the middle next, and the end last.

   The sentences in the following paragraphs are all jumbled up. Find the best order for the sentences so that they make the most sense, and then rewrite the paragraphs in that order. *Hint:* In the paragraphs in this exercise, the lead sentence names the main character so that the reader doesn't have to guess who the paragraph is about.

   Example:

   Jumbled Paragraph: He looked through the trees. The other horse was loaded with powder and bullets and clothes, and other things that Boone needed. One evening Daniel Boone sat by his cabin. He saw his brother riding on one horse and leading another. He thought that it might be Indians. He heard someone coming.

   Properly Sequenced: One evening Daniel Boone sat by his cabin. He heard someone coming. He thought that it might be Indians. He looked through the trees. He saw his brother riding on one horse and leading another. The other horse was loaded with powder and bullets and clothes, and other things that Boone needed.



If you discern that this exercise is beyond the capacity of your students and therefore will be frustrating to them, you can work on it together. Note that there are several possible sequences. We demonstrate only one of those possibilities here.

A. They took with them such things as were curious and valuable. Then they went home to North Carolina. These were the skins of animals they had killed, and no doubt some of the heads and tails. Daniel Boone and his brother picked out a good place in Kentucky to settle.

Sample order: Daniel Boone and his brother picked out a good place in Kentucky to settle. Then they went home to North Carolina. They took with them such things as were curious and valuable. These were the skins of animals they had killed, and no doubt some of the heads and tails.

B. The great swing carried him far out as it swung. He now thought of a way to break his tracks. Then he took hold of it. He fell to the ground, and then he ran away in a different direction from that in which he had been going. Boone had swung on grapevines when he was a boy. Then he let go. He cut the wild grapevine off near the root. He sprang out into the air with all his might.

Sample order: Boone had swung on grapevines when he was a boy. He now thought of a way to break his tracks. He cut the wild grapevine off near the root. Then he took hold of it. He sprang out into the air with all his might. The great swing carried him far out as it swung. Then he let go. He fell to the ground, and then he ran away in a different direction from that in which he had been going.

2. **PROOFREADING**—The following story is a tale about another honest American leader, Abraham Lincoln. Do you remember the proofreading marks from the last lesson?

This symbol means you should capitalize the letter—change it from lowercase to uppercase.

This mark is called a caret. It means "insert something here." You might be missing a word or proper punctuation.

This mark means "please delete." Think of it as an X through the word or words.

When you find a word circled and this symbol in the margin, the word has been misspelled.

Use the symbols to correct the following story, which has eight mistakes. Keep an eye out for capitalization, spelling, and punctuation mistakes as well as incomplete sentences.

In managing the country store, as in everything that he undertook for others, lincoln did his very best. On one okasion, when he counted over his cash, Lincoln found that he had taken a few cents from a customer more than was due. He closed the store and walked a long distance ~~to~~ to restore her money. at another time, dicovering on the scales in the morning a weight with which he had weighed out a package of tea for a woman the night before, he saw that he had given her too little for her money. He weighed out what ~~what~~ was due, and carried it to her, much to the surprise of the woman, who had not known that she was short in the amount of her purchase.

—adapted from "Why Lincoln was Called 'Honest Abe'" by Noah Brooks, from *Good Stories for Great Holidays* by Frances Jenkins Olcott

Lesson 2: Narrative Review

- Name some of the characters in *Treasure Island* or another story you know well.
  Jim Hawkins, Billy Bones, Blind Pew, Black Dog, Long John Silver, Dr. Livesey, Squire Trelawney
- Name some of the characters in the story of Joseph in Egypt from the Hebrew Scriptures or another book you know well.
  Joseph, his brothers, Benjamin, Pharaoh, Jacob, Potiphar, Potiphar's wife
- Can you think of a story without characters?
  I can't. I can think of stories in which inanimate objects such as houses and steam shovels become characters, but I can't think of a single story that doesn't have a character.
- The following stories tell two versions of the same incident. One is a narrative and the other is not. Can you tell the difference?
  Version 1 is a narrative. It has characters and a plot with a beginning, middle, and end. Version 2 is not a narrative. While it reports that cherry trees are sometimes chopped down by little boys and that George Washington may have been one of those boys, this information is not told with a beginning, middle, and end, and hence does not create the timeline of a plot. In addition, although it mentions the name "George Washington," it does not have any actual characters that are part of an interesting story.

Talk About It—

1. Although he was just a little boy, George probably knew better than to randomly chop down trees. He did not consider the consequences of his actions when he decided to cut down the tree for his pleasure. It's also not right to kill living things without a good reason. George's thoughtlessness could be considered untrustworthy. At the same time, his response to his father was trustworthy because he came right out and told the truth even though he knew he might be punished.
2. The main idea of the story is that honesty is important to building good character, even if it is painful. I agree with this idea because honesty is vital to building trust between people. Answers to the last question will vary.
3. Both stories are about a young boy who would later become a US president, and both depict the main character as being scrupulously honest. The circumstances of the stories are different. One involves an error of judgment with a cherry tree, and one involves a frontier store and a mistake in counting money. These are different sorts of errors.

4. Americans might have made up this story about Honest Abe because they wanted to build his reputation for honesty. Lincoln was loved by many people, and they wanted to show him in the best light. Even if it weren't true, the story would have value because it teaches a good moral lesson—similar to a lesson found in a parable—about the importance of honesty. However, it would have more moral force, more power, if it were true. In addition, its ability to establish Lincoln as an honest man would change if it were not true. It would also require us to question the character of those who made up the story and said it was true.
5. Honesty is an important part of leadership because without honesty, there can be no trust. People must be able to trust that their leader will act in their best interests. Too often kings, queens, presidents, and other leaders can use their power selfishly and harm their nations. Sometimes these dishonest leaders tax their people too much and steal from the national treasury. Others try to destroy the freedoms of their people in order to stay in power. In order for people to be safe and content, they must be able to trust their leaders to govern them honestly.

   In America, honesty has been important since the country's very beginning, when people came to America to escape dishonest oppression. Having an honest president is important to Americans because, from that history, we know the consequences of dishonest leadership.
6. McRae probably meant to emphasize the moral message of this story. The father is not angry, which implies that he has forgiven George. The fact that George is pointing to the tree shows his honesty. Honesty leads to trust and goodwill, and the father and son in this engraving clearly trust and understand one another. George Washington is also so esteemed by Americans that the artist may have wanted to portray him respectfully. If the artist had shown the father punishing the boy, this depiction would have shown George as naughty rather than honest.

Of all forms of writing, we encounter expository writing the most—in online news, in textbooks, in magazines, and on cereal boxes. Throughout this book, students will sharpen skills in expository writing, including:

- introducing and concluding the main topic
- summary
- use of narrative to capture interest and further the purpose of exposition
- establishing position (or opinion)
- working with paragraphs