

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are necessary for more than the college-bound student. Writing clear directions can prevent a friend from getting lost. A well-written letter to a newspaper or congressman could change an opinion. A well-planned presentation or report could provide needed insight on the job. We owe it to students to help them express their ideas thoughtfully and concisely so that they are not only prepared for their future, but are also able to make a positive contribution.

Composition topics can be chosen from studies in history, literature, and/or science. For example, while the students are digging up facts on an ancient civilization, instead of interrupting with an unrelated textbook writing assignment, choose the type of writing you want them to learn and relate it to their research. After reading a story out loud, follow up with a discussion and ask them to write a book review. Instead of simply reading a science text, let them choose a topic, find the information, and write a short report.

The information in this guide is arranged to allow flexibility. A type of writing and a topic may be chosen by the student or assigned by the teacher. The writing process can be explained, or capable students can read and follow the directions on their own. Skills can be worked on through the rewriting process as well as targeted for extra practice. By adjusting the curriculum to suit the student, progress is assured.

WHAT IS A COMPOSITION?

WHAT

Information about a single topic or theme is shared through writing.

WHY

The **purpose** could be to describe, explain, inform, prove a point (persuade), or tell what happened.

HOW

The entire composition revolves around one **main idea, thesis, or theme** which can be summed up in a single sentence. This characteristic is referred to as **unity**.

Support for the main idea can be presented using facts, quotes from experts (authorities) in the field, examples, illustrations, details, or comparisons.

Support is presented in logical order, making the composition **coherent**.

Word choice depends upon the audience. The writer wants the reader to understand and accept what he has to say. With that objective in mind, he may choose to write in a formal, business-like style, or in an informal, friendly manner. Likewise, the tone of the composition may be serious, or light and entertaining.

EXAMPLES

Biography
Interview
Letter
Narrative
News Story
Persuasive Editorial or Essay
Poetry
Report or Review
Short Story
Summary