A Creative Approach to the Classical Progymnasmata

Writing & Rhetoric

Narrative I

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Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative I

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Narrative I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Typical Teaching Week

Veteran teachers know that rarely is there anything typical about a teaching week. These guidelines are intended to help bring some predictability to lesson planning. Although the parts of speech and other elements of grammar are important aspects of this course, its primary focus is writing and rhetoric—as the name implies. It is recommended that teachers alternate between a course in grammar one week and *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative I* the next week. The schedule includes four days so that you can have flexibility to spend more time on some sections or to catch up.

Day One

1. The teacher models fluency by reading the text aloud while students follow along silently.
2. Students break off into pairs and reread the text to each other. In the case of longer fables, students can read in sections. Encouragement should be given to students to read with drama and flair where appropriate.
3. "Tell It Back" (Narration) and "Talk About It" should immediately follow the reading of the text, while the fable 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. Playacting the story from memory is another possible form of narration. (Note: 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.
4. "Go Deeper" comprehension exercises follow each text. They can help students better understand the selection as they work with vocabulary, main ideas, and character traits.

Day Two

1. Optional: The teacher can appoint a student or the entire class to read the text again.
2. Students then work with the text through the "Writing Time" exercises. In ancient times, at this level, the primary exercise was to summarize or amplify the length of the narrative. Other exercises include emulating a particular sentence, changing part of a story, or writing an entirely new story. Student work need not be completely original, but it should show some effort of thought.

Day Three or Four*

1. A time of sharing work can wrap up each lesson. In order to build confidence in public speaking, students should be encouraged to read their work aloud—either in pairs or to the entire class.
2. The "Speak It" section creates opportunities for students to recite, to play act, and to share their work aloud. Please consider using a recording device whenever it would suit the situation. In this case, have the student listen back to her recording to get an idea of what sounded right and what could be improved. Have students read the elocution instructions at the end of the book to help them work on skill in presentation.

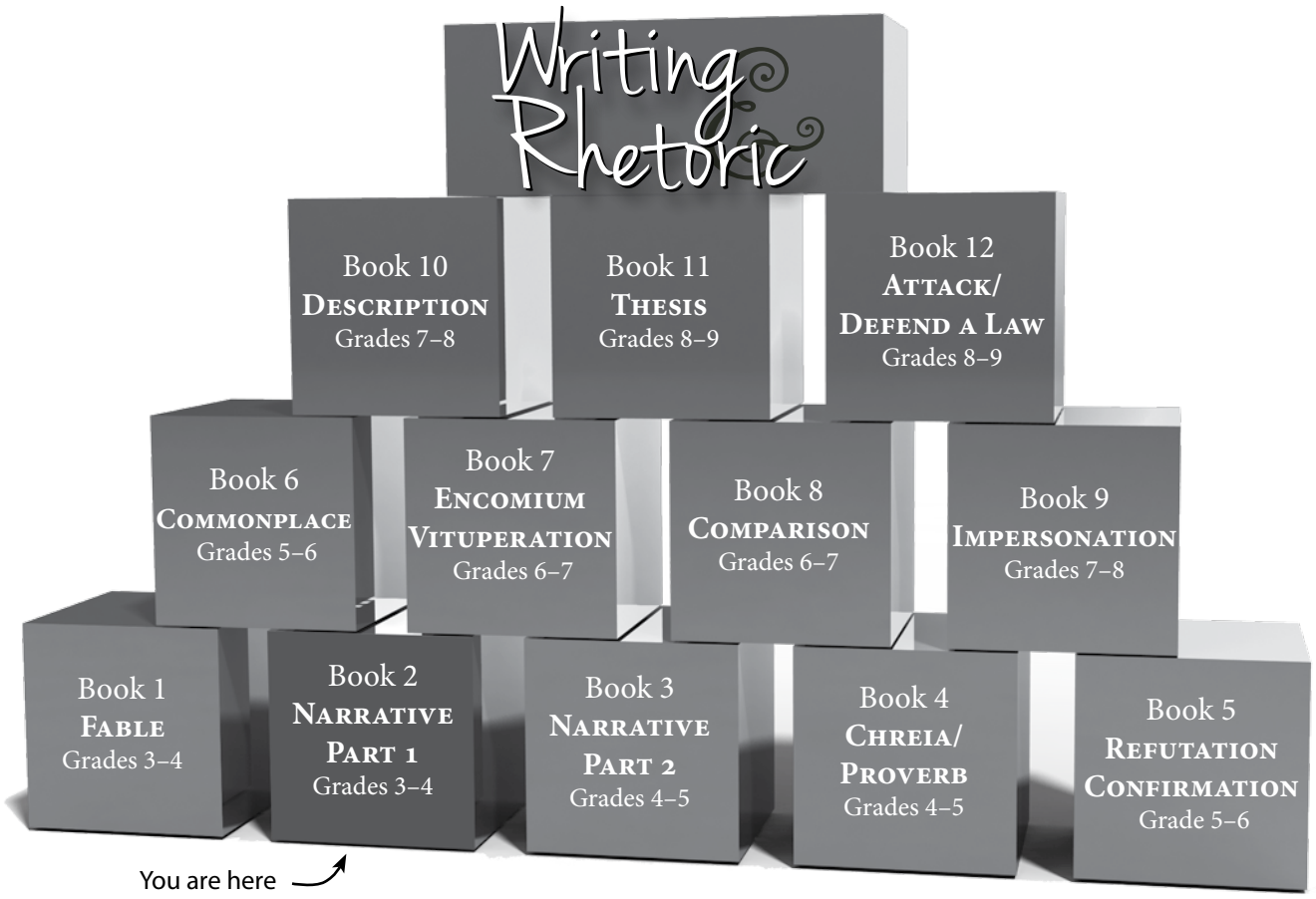
*The number of days per week assigned to the lessons is four so that you have some flexibility according to the pace and level of depth that you can take advantage of with your students.

Introduction to Students

We are glad you are studying writing and rhetoric and we think you will be glad, too! In the Writing & Rhetoric series, we use whole stories to teach you how to write. First you read and think about the stories, then you have the chance to rewrite them, making them longer or shorter. Eventually, after you learn how to do that, you will write your own story. By that time, your mind will be filled with characters, words, events, and even types of sentences that will help you write.

Often, when people are taught to write, they are asked to come up with material from thin air, or ex nihilo, which is a Latin phrase that means "out of nothing." For instance, many students return to school in the fall and are asked to write about their summer vacation. This can be fun, but we believe the best writing skills are developed when you have many ideas, words, and examples that show you a lot of ways in which other writers have written about a subject. In a way, these other writers become your writing guides. Frequently, when a writer doesn't have such a guide, he or she gets frustrated. Even famous writers have had such guides—often their work resembles the writing style of their teachers or guides.

Now, let's get writing!



The Writing & Rhetoric series provides students with forms and models of excellent writing that students can imitate on their path to masterful writing. The second book in the series continues the recovery of this proven method of teaching writing, using various forms of narrative to teach beginning writers the craft of writing well.

This is the second in a series of twelve books that will train students over six years, starting in grades three or four and up.

Introduction

Writing Happily

Where We Are Now with Writing

When it comes to writing, some students see the process as sweet delight. That was my experience. I always loved taking a blank sheet of paper and transforming it into something magical: a carnival twinkling in the night, a city street shining with rain and reflecting gas lamps, an avalanche flying down a spire of rock. But I know that writing is not a magical world for many children or even some adults.

When I served as a writing instructor at the University of Southern California (USC), I saw firsthand the failure of writing instruction at our primary and secondary schools. Hardly a day went by that I wasn't grading a stack of papers, and the torment, the agony, of writing seemed to writhe through the pages.

Many of those college students had difficulty writing grammatically correct and coherent paragraphs—let alone entire essays, persuasively written. These were smart students from privileged backgrounds. So how did they get to college with such meager writing skills? What was happening in school or at home to sabotage the development of writing? Something was clearly not working.

Some years after teaching at USC, I helped to establish The Oaks Academy in the inner city of Indianapolis. Our school has grown from a modest fifty students in 1998 to 400-plus students today. At The Oaks, our mission is "to provide a rich, classical education to children of diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds." Our diversity includes children who grow up in highly involved families as well as children who have limited access to opportunity and must often fend for themselves academically.

As director of curriculum, I was determined to find a writing program that served the needs of all of our students. I wanted a program that combined the best modern practices with the principles of classical education as defined by such disparate educators as the Roman rhetorician Quintilian and nineteenth-century British reformer Charlotte Mason. I felt strongly that students could be confident, persuasive writers by the eighth grade if they received the right combination of models and practice. Above all, I wanted to avoid the wasted years that led to faltering communication in college and beyond.

I examined quite a few programs. Each in its own way seemed to be lacking—both the modern courses and those purporting to be classically inspired. Nothing seemed to be "just right." Some programs were difficult to use. Others seemed too frivolous on the one hand or too heavy on the other. Still others lacked the necessary incremental steps.

The book you have in your hand is the fruit of my dissatisfaction. This is a curriculum built on the solid foundations of the past and framed with the vitality of the present. This is a curriculum that has been tested by ancient, medieval, and modern kids, and proven reliable for the ages. Along with caring teachers and a diet of good books, The Writing & Rhetoric series has taken the young people of The Oaks, kids from all sorts of advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds, and shaped them into fine communicators. As a current eighth-grade teacher, I am often delighted by the rhetorical firepower in my classroom.

Imitation as a Foundation for Learning Writing

An examination of the theory and practice of modern composition reveals some obvious problems. Too often students are asked to brainstorm, "prewrite," or "freewrite" according to their personal interests. This means, in essence, that they are supposed to conjure ideas out of thin air. When faced with a blank piece of paper, many students naturally draw a blank. They lack a conversation in their heads about where to begin. Good writing requires content. It abhors a vacuum.

Students are also expected to write with no clear model before them. Modern composition scolds traditional writing instruction as rote and unimaginative. It takes imitation to task for a lack of freedom and personal expression. And yet effective communication from writer to reader always requires some sort of form and structure. Many of history's greatest writers learned by imitation. Benjamin Franklin, for example, taught himself to write by studying classic books and copying whole passages verbatim. He would then put the book aside and try to reconstruct the passage from memory.

Today's emphasis on originality and creativity has failed. When students lack a form by which to express their ideas, their creativity lacks vitality. As Alexander Pope tells us in his "An Essay on Criticism": "True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance, / As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance." In other words, writing takes the same kind of determined study as ballet or diving. Creativity uses conventional form as a stage or a springboard from which to launch grand jetés and somersaults.

But there's yet another problem. Too often students are expected to tackle complex writing assignments without learning the necessary intermediate steps. Without due concern, teachers require summer vacation narratives, persuasive letters, research papers, and poetic descriptions. All of these forms require skills that must be developed in stages. The assumption is that because most everyone can speak English well enough to be understood, and form letters with a pencil, that everyone should be able to write well. And yet how many of us would expect a child to sit at a piano, without piano lessons, and play a concerto? How many of us would expect a child with a hammer and a chisel and a block of marble to carve the statue of David as well as Michelangelo?

Writing is never automatic. The skills of the trade will not miraculously materialize somewhere along the school way. They take years to master. This is because writing demands thoughtfulness, organization, grammatical skill, rhetorical skill, and an ear for the English language. Most children have a natural inclination for one or two of these skills. Rarely do they have a knack for all. The other skills need to be developed and matured.

When it comes down to it, writing is simply thinking on paper. Or thinking in some digital realm. Writing is thought translated to symbols—the symbolic language of the alphabet. The difficulty lies in the process of translation. I may picture a face or a waterfall clearly in my mind. It's quite another thing to describe the face or waterfall articulately in writing. I may have beautiful arguments on the tip of my tongue for buying a Great Dane puppy, but can I make the case persuasively on a piece of paper? The thinking comes first; the writing comes second. Both need to mature together.

What Is to Be Done

If we have lost our way, it rarely helps to plunge blindly forward. It often helps to retrace our steps. And so it is with writing. We have much to learn from the wisdom of the ages. The Greeks developed a system of persuasive speaking known as rhetoric. The Romans, who came later, were also in love with rhetoric, but they took it to the next level. In order to prepare their young students for dazzling oration, the Romans invented a complementary system of persuasive writing.

This writing system was so dynamic, so effective, that it outlasted the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. It even survived into early modern times. This method employed fluent reading, careful listening, models for imitation, and progressive steps. In short, it did many of the things that are out of fashion today, but gave us writers like Cicero and John Milton.

The Romans in the Greek-speaking part of the Empire called their system the *progymnasmata* (pro-gym-naz-ma-ta). This strange, mouthful of a word derives from the same root for exercise as do "gymnasium" and "gymnastics." It means "preliminary exercises." The goal of these lessons is to prepare students for rhetoric, which is the art of writing well and speaking persuasively. This method assumes that students learn best by reading excellent examples of literature and by growing their skills through imitation. Successful writers study great writing. Successful orators study great speeches.

Each exercise is intended to impart a skill (or tool) that can be employed in all kinds of writing and speaking. The exercises are arranged from simple to more complex. What's more, the exercises are cumulative, meaning that later exercises incorporate the skills acquired in preceding exercises. This means, for example, that the skill of reporting or narrating (derived from the narrative exercise) will be regularly practiced and used in future exercises. While engaging in praising an individual (encomium exercise), a student will need to report or narrate an important event or achievement. While comparing two individuals (comparison exercise), a student will often need to praise an individual (encomium).

Studying and acquiring the skills imparted by the *progymnasmata* (hereafter referred to as *progym*) exercises is much like the way in which we acquire skill in cooking or in a sport such as soccer. In the case of cooking, students must first learn the foundational skills of measuring, pouring, and mixing. Then they must learn skills relating to using a frying pan and oven. Each recipe requires the employment of these foundational skills—no matter how complicated it is. A sport like soccer also requires the mastery of basic skills such as kicking, passing, and dribbling. These foundational skills are carried forward into every soccer play and every game strategy.

Think of the *progym* as a step-by-step apprenticeship in the art of writing and rhetoric. What is an apprentice? It is a young person who is learning a skill from a master teacher. Our students will serve as apprentices to the great writers and great stories of history.

Quintilian, one of the master teachers of Rome, tells us that good habits are the foundation of education. In his *Institutio Oratoria*, he writes, "Once a bad habit has become ingrained, it is easier to break than bend. So strong is custom formed in early years." This master teacher also tells us that natural ability is nothing if it is not "cultivated by skillful teaching, persistent study, and continuous and extensive practice in writing, reading, and speaking."

Getting Started

The place to begin is reading, which should be encouraged as one of life's great pleasures from a child's earliest days. Parents should introduce books to babies as soon as they can keep their eyes open. Babies love to hear the sound of their parents' voices. They love the feeling of snuggling in a parent's lap. They love bright books and pictures. Reading helps develop joint attention, which is necessary for any language acquisition. The more a child reads and is read to, the better the foundation for writing. And if a parent feels he or she has been negligent in reading, it's never too late to get started.

The necessary corollary is that we must limit screens: TV, the Internet, and video games should stay off as much as possible! Without realizing it, many parents sabotage the ability of their children to think by allowing an excess of these media. Researchers are telling us, in no uncertain terms, that

an imbalance of electronics can be harmful to clear thinking and focused attention. If children don't have time for books, they don't have time for glowing screens. (Unless, of course, that glowing screen contains a book.) Even boredom and daydreaming can be more productive than too much media exposure! A brain needs rest in order to do the hard work of synthesizing information, problem solving, and making connections between ideas.

Next to reading, it's important for children to get comfortable with the formation of letters. Children should work on penmanship to strengthen neural pathways that allow thinking and writing at the same time. Once writing mechanics come easily, it is much easier to make progress in the complex skill of "thinking on paper." As is often the case, there's more to a fine motor skill than meets the eye. With writing, children must learn to grip the pencil properly, to move their arms and wrists smoothly, and to stay focused on the page. Keep practice sessions short, but frequent—about ten minutes a day for seven- and eight-year-olds.

Before children begin *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative I*, they should also know how to identify and create a complete sentence. In other words, they should be able to recognize the presence or absence of a subject or a predicate, and know how to use capital letters and simple punctuation. The sentence is the DNA of written ideas. *Writing & Rhetoric: Fable* is the best way to begin this series.

After This—Formal Rhetoric

The formal study of rhetoric will develop in students a solid theoretical understanding of rhetoric, helping them to better understand why and how to employ the skills they have acquired while studying these exercises. The *progym* will prepare your students to enjoy transforming that blank sheet of paper into a spectacular view from atop the pinnacle of their own imagination.

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 owes almost everything to 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 a host of the new Common Core Standards for English and the Language Arts. In *Narrative I*, these include:

- Asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of the text
- Recounting stories and fables from diverse cultures
- Describing characters in a story
- Determining the meaning of words and phrases in the text
- Distinguishing one's point of view from the point of view of story characters
- Explaining how an illustration enhances the text
- Providing reasons to support an opinion
- Writing narratives to develop imagined experiences

While the goals of the Common Core Standards are certainly worthwhile, the *progym* derive their 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, but they retain all of the power of classical rhetoric.

Here is how the progym develops 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, expository, and persuasive elements
8. Impersonation & Description—Descriptive essays with narrative, expository, persuasive, and comparative elements

9. Thesis—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements
10. Defend/Attack a Law—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, comparative, and technical elements

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

Teaching Narrative to Students

Now that your students have studied one particular, condensed form of a story—the fable—they are ready to consider other forms that a story can take. There is wisdom in the sequence of the *progym*. By starting with the imaginative fable, students have waded into writing and rhetoric without getting in over their heads. Now, through examining other forms of story, students will gain two important advantages: 1) They experience the delight of expanded horizons, and 2) They move from the simple to a more complex version of what they already know. Since the progym are cumulative, students can move forward with confidence, mastering each step along the way and using all that they have mastered in each succeeding exercise.

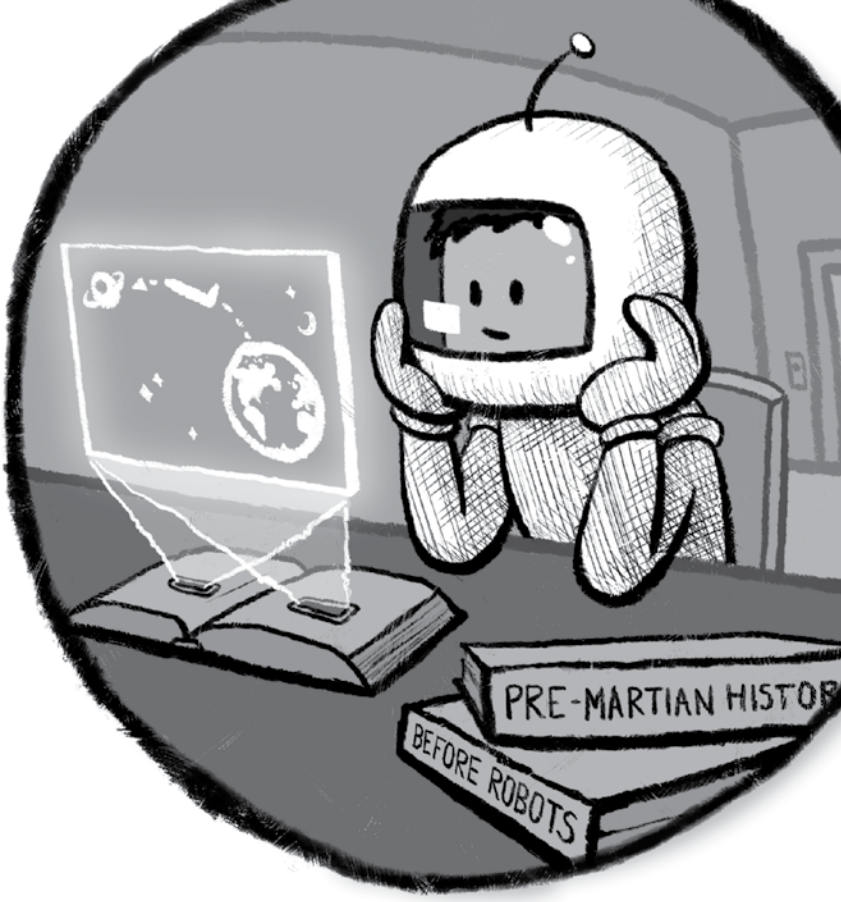
Students should know that fables are in fact a subset of narrative, which includes all forms of story, from fairy tales and history to myths and parables. Teachers should mention explicitly that fables were step number one to learning about and imitating these other types of story.

What a delight to know that the best and most persuasive writing and speaking contains plenty of stories! Throughout their lives, students will be telling and retelling all kinds of stories. Students should learn the art of narrative so that they become excellent storytellers themselves. Narrative is an essential rhetorical skill that never goes out of fashion.

Objectives for *Narrative I*

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

1. Expose students to different forms of narrative writing as well as culturally important examples.
2. Model fluent reading for students and give them practice reading short texts.
3. Give students practice in copying texts accurately.
4. Strengthen working memory through dictation, thus improving storage and manipulation of information.
5. Increase understanding of the flexibility and copiousness of language through sentence manipulation.
6. Facilitate student interaction with well-written texts through question and answer and through exercises in summary and amplification.
7. Give students opportunities to creatively imitate sentences and narrative sections.
8. Introduce the concepts of plot (beginning, middle, and end), dialogue, and description.



Lesson 1

All Kinds of Stories

Narrative is a fancy word for "story." Your teacher has probably already asked you many times "to narrate" the stories you read in class. "To narrate" means "to tell," and it comes from the Latin word *narrare*, which also means "to tell." So if you are asked to narrate a **narrative**,[1] you are being asked to tell a story.

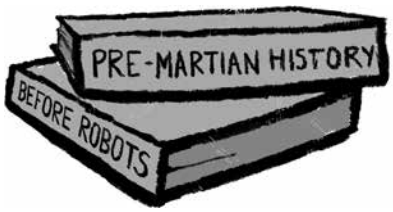
What would life be like without stories? Without stories, our lives would be as empty and dull as a dark cave. Stories help to shed light on the world so that we can make sense of it. Have your parents ever told you about your family's **history**? Did your mother and father tell you how they first met or about the day you were born? Did they tell you what you were like as a baby? Without stories, we wouldn't know who we are.

1. All of the bolded words in this book (other than category titles) are in the glossary at the back of the book.

Do you know how the earth appeared in space? Was it always there, the third planet from the sun, making its way around the Milky Way galaxy? Or was there a time when the universe "gave birth" to our planet? What about the earliest human civilizations? Did people always drive cars and fly in airplanes? Was there a time when windows didn't even have glass? Do you know how the United States got its start? Did America always have fifty states?

If you know the answers to these questions, it's because you have been told narratives. Nothing would make sense without them. When we dream at night, we dream in stories. When we remember a happy memory, we remember in stories. When we learn our lessons, we learn in stories. When we tattle on a classmate, we tell the story of his rude behavior. Our very lives are stories in the making.

In this world, there are all kinds of stories. We've already taken a careful look at **fables** in *Writing & Rhetoric: Fable*.



▶ Do you remember the definition of a "fable"?

Even though fables are certainly fabulous, we would be sorry if they were the only type of story in this world. What would we do without detectives and cowgirls, princesses and pirates, superheroes and knights? Happily, the world is full of all kinds of stories. The more you listen to these stories, the bigger your imagination will grow. The bigger your imagination, the better you can tell your own stories. Who knows? Someday you might become a master storyteller yourself.

▶ Can you think of some other types of stories?

If you love adventure, you can hardly do better than a **fairy tale**. These stories were created especially for children, and they are full of magical people (such as fairy godmothers) and magical creatures (such as unicorns). Most fairy tales reward the good characters with splendid weddings or fabulous riches so that they live "happily ever after." The bad characters usually suffer terrible, but well-deserved, endings. In

the original *Cinderella*, for example, the cinder girl marries the handsome prince, and the wicked stepsisters have their eyes pecked out by pigeons.

Myths are another important type of story. When you read about gods, goddesses, and **mortal** heroes, you probably have a book of mythology in your hands. Myths were used by ancient people to explain the beginning of things that could not easily be explained. Why are there seasons? Where did people come from? How did the mountains form? What causes lightning and thunder? Storytellers, such as the blind poet Homer, also created myths to give a glorious past to their ancestors. Myths are almost never about actual events, but the people who created them often believed them with religious faith.

Strange as it may seem, history is a type of story as well. The word "story" even has its roots in the word "history." With history, the storyteller is trying to tell about events that really happened or a person that really lived. The ancient Greeks wrote histories about their civilization. Herodotus, in particular, is known as the Father of History. He is one of the first writers to record the causes and events of a real war—the clash between Persia and Greece.

Parables are another form of story that you most likely know about. We will discuss parables in our next lesson.

The main thing that all stories have in common is a beginning, a middle, and an end. In other words, the events of a story usually happen in order according to some sort of plan.

If a day were a story, the sunrise would be the beginning. Noon would be the middle.

▶ And what would be the end?

One of the most famous story beginnings is found in Homer's long poem, *The Odyssey*.

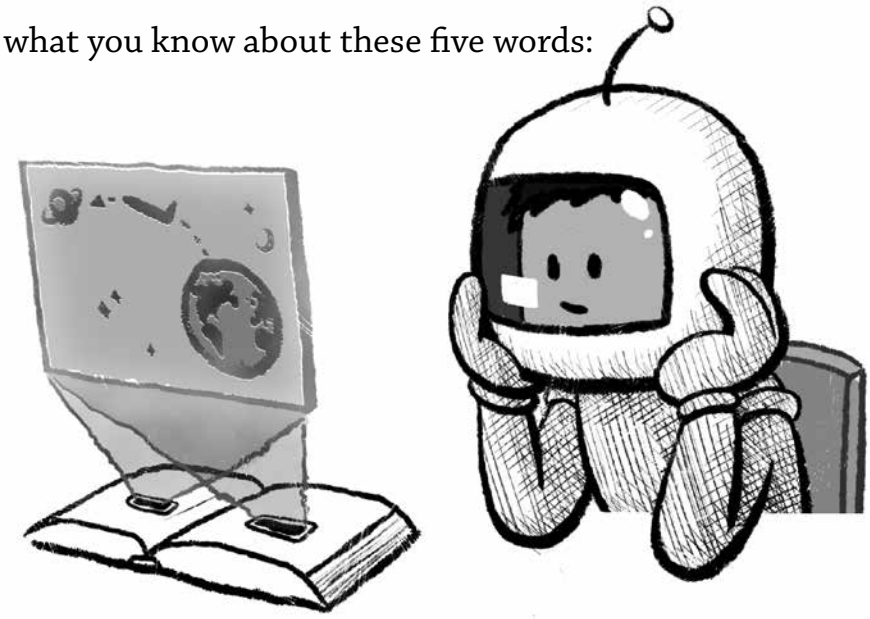
> Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations . . .

Of course, *The Odyssey* wouldn't be much of a story if the hero, Odysseus, simply climbed on board his ship and sailed straight home. Along the way, he meets all sorts of trouble: a one-eyed giant, a six-headed sea monster, a terrible sucking whirlpool, huge storms, and scary witches. These troubles form the middle of the story. And what about the ending? Well, the ending is equally famous. Odysseus returns home, only to find his palace filled with bad men. He must fight the bad men and drive them from his home before he can, at last, embrace his wife and enjoy peace and quiet.

Beginning. Middle. End. In this book, you'll have a chance to work on each part. So now let's get to it!

Tell It Back—**Narration**

Without looking at the text, tell what you know about these five words:



- Narrative
- Fable
- Fairy tale
- History
- Myth

Talk About It—

To answer the following questions, please refer to these story types:

- Narrative—All forms of story, from fairy tale, to history, to myths, to parables, to fables.
- Fable—A short story that teaches a simple moral lesson, usually with talking animals.
- Fairy tale—A fanciful story for children, usually with magical people or creatures.
- History—A narrative of actual events.
- Myth—An ancient story not based on actual events, with gods, goddesses, and heroes.

1. What type of story would be best if you wanted to tell about the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906? Why?

2. What type of story would be best if you wanted to warn children not to talk to strangers? Why?

3. What type of story would you most likely find on stone tablets found in a temple in ancient Egypt. Why?

4. In what type of story would you encounter fire-breathing dragons, dwarves, and magic mirrors?

5. What type of story do you like best? Why?

Go Deeper—

1. Each of these narratives represents a certain type of story. Label the following paragraphs as fable, fairy tale, history, or myth.

   _____ An eagle was shot in the breast by an arrow. As he lay dying, he turned his eyes to the arrow and saw his own feather on the shaft. "Ah!" he cried. "How cruel that I should be the cause of my own death!"

   _____ In the middle of summer, a terrible disease began to show itself in the city of Athens. People in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent fevers, and redness and swelling in the eyes.

   _____ The fisherman shook the jar to find out what was inside. Presently smoke poured out and spiraled toward heaven. When the smoke

reached its full height, the thick vapor condensed and became a huge genie. His head was like a dome, his hands like pitchforks, his legs as long as masts, and his mouth as big as a cave.

_____ The god Dionysus wanted to reward King Midas for his hospitality. So he said, "Ask for one wish and I will grant it." The greedy king replied, "Oh, honored god, I would be happy forever if everything I touched turned to gold."

_____ Athena was the goddess of wisdom, but on one occasion she did a very foolish thing. She entered into a competition with the goddesses Hera and Aphrodite for the prize of beauty.

_____ Jack jumped down and got hold of the ax and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it halfway through. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver so he stopped to see what was the matter. Then Jack gave another chop with the ax, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

_____ On August 17, 1807, a curious crowd of people in New York gathered at a boat landing. Tied to the dock was a strange-looking craft. A smokestack rose above the deck. From the sides of the boat, there stood out queer-shaped paddle wheels. Of a sudden, the clouds of smoke from the smokestack grew larger, the paddle wheels turned, and the boat, to the astonishment of all, moved.

_____ A wolf one day saw his shadow, which was made large by the setting sun. "See how big I am!" he exclaimed. "Fancy me running away from a puny lion! I'll show him who is fit to be king of the beasts." Just then a huge shadow blotted him out entirely and the next instant a lion struck him down with a single blow.

_____ Mounted on a fine warhorse and clad in white armor from head to foot, Joan rode along past the cheering crowds. In one hand she carried an ancient sword that she had found near the tomb of a saint, and in the other a white banner sewn with lilies. The rough soldiers who were near her stopped swearing and treated her with their very best manners.

2. If you can clearly see the plan (or outline) of a story, you will become a better story planner yourself. Based on the clues in the following passages, try to identify the beginning, the middle, and the end of each story. It will help if you are familiar with the stories. Use *B* for beginning, *M* for middle, and *E* for end. Hint: All of these stories have happy endings. The middles of these stories always carry on what got started in the beginng, but with more trouble or conflict.

The Tortoise and the Hare —A fable from *Aesop's Fables*

____ A hare was making fun of a tortoise one day for being so slow. But the tortoise said, "I get where I'm going sooner than you think. I'll run a race with you to prove it." The hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed.

____ The hare was soon out of sight, running as fast as the wind. Seeing the tortoise nowhere in sight, the hare lay down beside the road to take a nap and give the tortoise a chance to catch up. Meanwhile, the tortoise kept jogging slowly but steadily.

____ When the hare woke up at last, he saw the tortoise nearing the finish line. The hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not catch up with the tortoise in time.

Cinderella —A fairy tale from The Brothers Grimm

____ Then Cinderella seated herself on a stool and put her foot into the slipper, which fitted like a glove. When she rose up, the prince looked at her face and recognized her as the beautiful maiden he had danced with. The prince cried, "She will be my bride!"

____ When Cinderella came to live with her stepsisters, she had to do hard work from morning till night. She had to get up before daybreak, carry water, light fires, cook, and wash. Besides this, the stepsisters mocked her and emptied her peas into the ashes, so that she was forced to sit and pick them out again. In the evening, when Cinderella had worked till she was weary, she had no bed to go to, but had to sleep by the hearth in the cinders.

____ At the ball, the prince approached Cinderella and, with a bow, said, "Would you dance with me?" Then he took her by the hand and they twirled across the floor. The prince would dance with no other maiden, and never let loose of her hand.

Black Beauty —Adapted from a novel (with the same name) by Anna Sewell about a horse

____ I was sold to a corn dealer and baker . . . One day I was loaded more than usual, and part of the road was a steep uphill. I used all my strength, but I could not get on, and was obliged continually to stop. This did not please my driver, and he laid his whip on badly. "Get on, you lazy fellow," he said, "or I'll make you." Again I started the heavy load, and struggled on a few yards; again the whip came down, and again I struggled forward. The pain of that great cart whip was sharp, but my mind was hurt quite as much as my poor sides.

____ My troubles are all over, and I am at home; and often before I am quite awake, I fancy I am still in the orchard at my childhood home, standing with my old friends under the apple trees.

____ While I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night I lay down close by her. When it was hot we used to stand by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold we had a nice warm shed near the grove.

The Myth of the Minotaur —A myth from Ancient Greece

____ In the darkness, Theseus heard the Minotaur breathing. He waited against the wall and saw two eyes, glowing red like flames, moving slowly toward him. With a sudden leap, Theseus struck with his sword. The Minotaur fell dead to the ground. Safe at last, the Hero started on his way back to daylight.

____ In the polis of Athens, there lived a young prince by the name of Theseus. As the son of the king of Athens, Theseus could have lived a soft and easy life, but instead he dreamed of brave deeds and daring adventures. His first test was not long in coming. Athens had a problem. On the island of Crete, a labyrinth had been constructed to contain the terrible Minotaur. The Minotaur was a monster with a man's body and a bull's head, and it fed on human flesh. Every year, the Athenians were forced to send seven youths and seven maids to Crete, where they would be eaten by the Minotaur in his labyrinth.

____ Theseus vowed that he would slay the Minotaur himself or die trying. The maiden Ariadne gave the hero a sword and a ball of thread. "Use the thread to find your way out of the labyrinth again," she said. "Its halls are long and dark and it is easy to get lost. Beware of the Minotaur, for he can smell human flesh."

Speak It—

Memorize the definition of the following narrative forms and say them aloud to your teacher or to a classmate. Or you can practice the definitions by recording them with your favorite audio device, and playing them back.

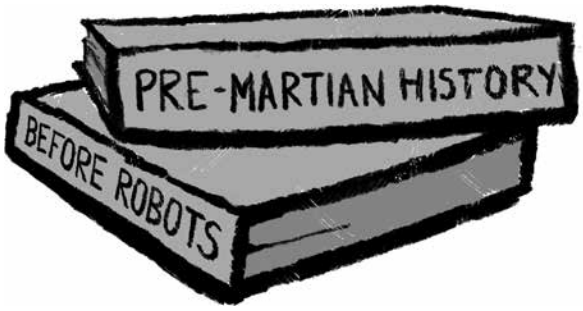
Narrative—All forms of story, from fairy tale, to history, to myths, to parables, to fables.

Fable—A short story that teaches a simple moral lesson, usually with talking animals.

Fairy tale—A fanciful story for children, usually with magical people or creatures.

History—A narrative of actual events.

Myth—An ancient story not based on actual events, with gods, goddesses, and heroes.



Lesson 2

A Long Parable

Along with fables, myths, fairy tales, and histories, another important form of narrative is the parable. If you have ever read or heard stories from the Christian Scriptures, you know that many of these famous stories are parables.

▶ You might even know who was famous for telling parables. Can you guess?

If you answered, "Jesus" (born sometime between 3 and 6 BC), you are correct.

Parables are similar to fables—they are also short stories meant to teach moral lessons—but unlike fables they are always true to life. Parables never include talking lambs or racing tortoises as fables do. Nor do they include flying carpets, magic beans, or wicked dwarves as fairy tales do. Nor do parables include gods of the sea or gods of the air or monsters with snakes for hair as myths do. Instead, parables tell stories that could have happened in real life and that teach a moral lesson.

Jesus spoke in parables to make big ideas understandable to ordinary people. But not everybody understood Jesus's parables. His enemies were often confused

by them. Like a sword with two edges, parables had a way of making things clear to Jesus' friends and frustrating to the minds of His enemies.

You will not find any simple morals or proverbs after a parable. Unlike fables, the morals of parables are not easy to explain with a proverb. Most parables illustrate the love of God and the idea of the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus said was coming.

Fable	Parable
Talking animals—represent human vice or virtue	True to life—set in the real world
How to be wise—Simple moral or ethical lesson	Complex moral or spiritual lesson, basic truth

What are some of Jesus's most famous parables? *The Good Samaritan*. *The Lost Sheep*. *The Sower*. In this lesson, we'll take a close look at *The Prodigal Son*.

The Prodigal Son

—Retold by George Hodges, adapted from his *When the King Came: Stories from the Four Gospels*, 1904; Luke 15:11-32

Once upon a time, there was a man who had two sons. The elder son was quiet and steady, but the younger son was a restless lad who was weary of staying at home, and wished to go and see the world. So the younger son went one day to his father and asked for the money that would properly come to him when he was older. "Father," he said, "give me my share of your estate." And the father, who was a man of wealth, gave the younger son what he had been saving for him.

Then the younger son took his money, and he went a long way off into the great world, where he had a fine time. He spent his money on rich clothing and expensive lodgings, buying whatever was sweet to eat and sour to drink. All he thought about was how to have an even better time the next day. And so the days went by. Some of the sweets gave him a toothache, and some of the sours gave him a headache, and none of the pleasures lasted long; but he fancied that he was enjoying them all. At

last, one morning, he woke up to find that he had not a penny in his pocket. All the money his father had given him was gone.

And then something dreadful happened. In that land, there arose a mighty famine. Now a famine, as you probably know, is a time when everybody is hungry and there is nothing to eat. There had been no rain. The grain had stopped growing, and the grass had stopped growing, and everything had ceased to grow, except people's appetites—they grew bigger and bigger.

This was very hard for the lad who had spent all his money. Moreover, he found that in losing his wealth he had lost his friends also. All the fun-loving young men and women to whom he had given so many gifts now turned their backs upon him. When they saw him in the street, they went around the corner to avoid him. After all, they had been only friends of his money. Indeed, the younger son himself had not been a true friend to them either. He had never really cared about anybody but himself. He had never helped another; so now there was none who would help him.

Only one course was open to the younger son if he didn't want to starve—he had to go to work. But even work was hard to find. He did not know enough to do skilled work, such as pottery or carpentry. In spite of his fine clothes and his soft hands, he could do nothing but unskilled work. That is the hardest kind of work and the worst paid. In the end, the only job he could find was that of a swineherd. Day after day, in sun and rain, he tended pigs in the field. And because it was a time of famine, when food was failing even in rich houses, he had to have his dinner with the pigs. Now a menu for a pig's dinner is not a pleasant meal for a man, even when the trough is full to the brim. Think, then, what it must have been like in the middle of a famine. The swine had husks, and the **prodigal** son had nothing better to eat. The farmer came out with a bucketful of husks and dumped them down upon the ground, and the boy and the pigs fought together for the best pieces.

Then the prodigal son thought of home. He could shut his eyes and see how it all looked: the house where he was born, with trees about it; the rooms within, and all the familiar furniture; the table spread for dinner, and his father and mother and elder brother sitting down. Was there a place left for him? Why, even his father's servants had enough food to spare, and here he was, perishing with hunger.

Finally, he could stand it no longer. The prodigal son said to himself, "I will go home. I will go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no longer worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.'" So he filled his pockets with husks, and shut the gate upon the swine, and turned his face toward home.

Now that day his father was looking and looking down the road. It had been many months since he had heard from the younger son, and the last news had not been pleasant news. So he watched the road, saying to himself, "Someday he will come back." Away down the street, walking slowly, like one who is weary after a long journey, or like one who is very doubtful if he will be welcome, came a man: probably a tramp, for his clothes were ragged and dirty, and yet with a familiar look. And the father looked again, and behold, it was his younger son.

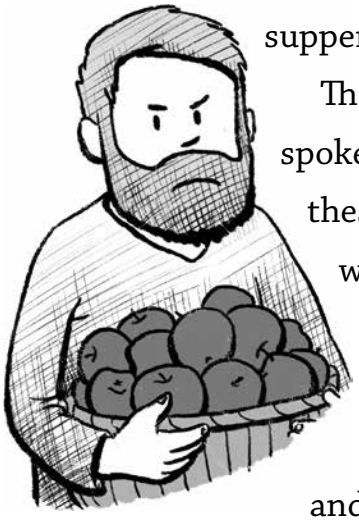
What did the father do? Did he say, "There is my bad son! There is the son who has disgraced himself and me! He has spent all his money and is coming back for more. He thinks that I will forgive him, but he will find that he is very much mistaken." No! He jumped up instantly, running out of the house and down the road, so that he met his prodigal son while the lad was yet a great way from the house. He had compassion, and greeted him, and put his arms around him and kissed him. And the prodigal son began to say the words which he had been repeating to himself, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no more worthy to be called your son." But the father brought him in, and called the servants. "Bring forth the best robe," he said, "and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry."

So the servants cooked the very nicest dinner which they knew how to make, and the neighbors were sent for; and after dinner men were brought in with banjos and violins, and all began to dance.

There was one exception, however, to this merriment. That was the elder son. He was working in the field, knowing nothing of this great event. When he came home to supper, the elder son was much surprised to hear a great noise of talking and laughing, with music and dancing. All the young men and women of the neighborhood seemed to be there, having a beautiful time. The elder son thought it strange that there should be

a party at his house, and he not be invited. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And the servant said, "Your brother is come; and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound."

But the elder son was angry, and would not go in. "My brother has been a fool," he said to himself, "and bad besides. Now he comes home and my father takes him in and makes much of him. My brother ought to have a whipping instead of a supper."



Then the father left the guests and the dancing, and came out and spoke to his angry elder son. And the elder son said to his father, "All these years I've stayed quietly at home, and minded your business, working early and late upon the farm, and never disobeying you. And you have never given any party for me. You have never made a supper that I might be merry with my friends. And now your worthless son has come, who has wasted your money in fooling around and getting drunk, and you are giving him the best you have."

But the Father said, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was fitting that we should make merry and be glad; for your brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Tell It Back—**Narration**

1. Without looking at the parable, tell back *The Prodigal Son* as best as you can remember it using your own words and any words from the story. For further practice, you could record your "telling it back" and play it afterwards.

   - Keep the events of the story in their proper order.

Here are the first two sentences to get you started:

Once upon a time, there was a man who had two sons. The elder son was quiet and steady, but the younger son was a restless lad who was weary of staying at home, and wished to go and see the world.

2. Put the events in order below, using B for beginning, M for middle, and E for end.

_____ The younger son went one day to his father and asked for the money that would properly come to him when he was older.

_____ Day after day, in sun and rain, the prodigal son tended pigs in the field.

_____ The father had compassion, and greeted his younger son, and put his arms around him and kissed him.

3. **WRITTEN NARRATIVE**

   a. Write your own sentence to tell what happens at the <u>beginning</u> of the story.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b. Write your own sentence to tell what happens in the <u>middle</u> of the story.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   c. Write your own sentence to tell what happens at the <u>end</u> of the story.

   _____

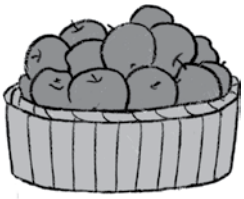
   _____

   _____

Talk About It—

1. How would you spend your money if you were suddenly given a large fortune?

2. What do you think happens in the end of this story? Is the older brother persuaded to join the feast, or does he remain in the courtyard, angry and unforgiving?



3. Examine the painting *The Return of the Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt van Rijn, painted around 1667. Why do you suppose the boy's hair has been shaved off? Why is one of his sandals on and the other one off? Why do you suppose he's not looking up into his father's face? Who is the man standing on the right?

Go Deeper—

1. The word "prodigal" comes from the Latin word *prodigus*, which is a combined word meaning "to drive away" or "scatter." Because the prodgal son scatters his money and his life on foolish things, the word "prodigal" probably means:

   a. sensible
   b. friendly
   c. wasteful
   d. heroic

2. Use the word "prodigal" in your own complete sentence. Be sure that the meaning of the word is clear.

   _____

   _____

3. The father in this story could have sent his younger son away or made him work like a servant. Instead, he had compassion and welcomed him home with open arms. Which words mean nearly the same thing as compassion?

   a. anger and punishment
   b. care and kindness
   c. sorrow and sadness
   d. laughter and happiness

4. Circle the adjectives that best describe the younger son at the beginning of the parable.

   selfish and careless kind and generous

   bold and brave dirty and smelly

5. Circle the adjectives that best describe the younger son as he returns home in the middle of the parable.

scared and cowardly	ashamed and sorry
happy and excited	goofy and silly

6. How do you think the younger son felt at the end of the parable?

   a. greedy for more money
   b. ready for more fun and parties
   c. frightened that his father would make him a servant
   d. safe in his father's love

7. Do you think the younger son will change his ways or will he remain the same? Explain your answer using complete sentences.

   change his ways remain the same

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. Does the father change during the story or does he always stay the same? Explain your answer using complete sentences.

   he changes he always stays the same

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

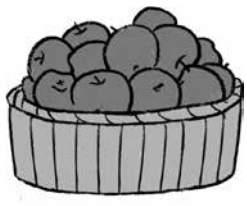
9. The father in this story stands for someone. The father is like:
    a. an angry old man
    b. a greedy king
    c. a loving God
    d. a kind soldier

10. The characters in *The Prodigal Son* are imaginary or make-believe people. They never really existed. The word **fiction** is often used to describe an imaginary story. And yet, even though the story is fiction, Jesus uses it to illustrate something He believes is true. What do you suppose is true of the story?

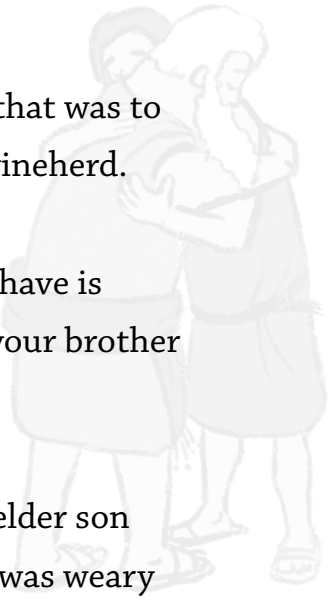
    a. The father hates the prodigal son and wants to destroy him.
    b. The father loves the prodigal son and rejoices when he comes back home.
    c. The father wants the prodigal son to earn his love by working hard like a servant.
    d. The father wants the prodigal son to stay far away and never come home.

11. Which two of these verses from the Hebrew Scriptures do you think best expresses the main idea of *The Prodigal Son*?

    a. "Go and cry out to the [false] gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"—Judges 10:14
    b. "The LORD your God is with you,/ he is mighty to save./ He will take great delight in you,/ he will quiet you with his love,/ he will rejoice over you with singing."—Zephaniah 3:17
    c. "He who loves pleasure will become poor."—Proverbs 21:17
    d. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses,/ but we trust in the name of the LORD our God."—Psalm 20:7



12. Put the events in order below, using B for beginning, M for middle, and E for end.



_____ Only one course was open to the boy, except to starve, and that was to go to work. In the end, the only job he could find was that of a swineherd.

_____ The father said, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was fitting that we should make merry and be glad; for your brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

_____ Once upon a time, there was a man who had two sons. The elder son was quiet and steady, but the younger son was a restless lad who was weary of staying at home, and wished to go and see the world.

Writing Time—

1. **COPYWORK**—Neatly copy the sentence in the space provided:

   Some of the sweets gave him a toothache, and some of the sours gave him a headache, and none of the pleasures lasted long.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **DICTATION**—Your teacher will read a little part of *The Prodigal Son* back to you. Please listen carefully! After your teacher reads once, she will read slowly again and include the punctuation marks. Your task will be to write down the sentences as your teacher reads them one by one.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

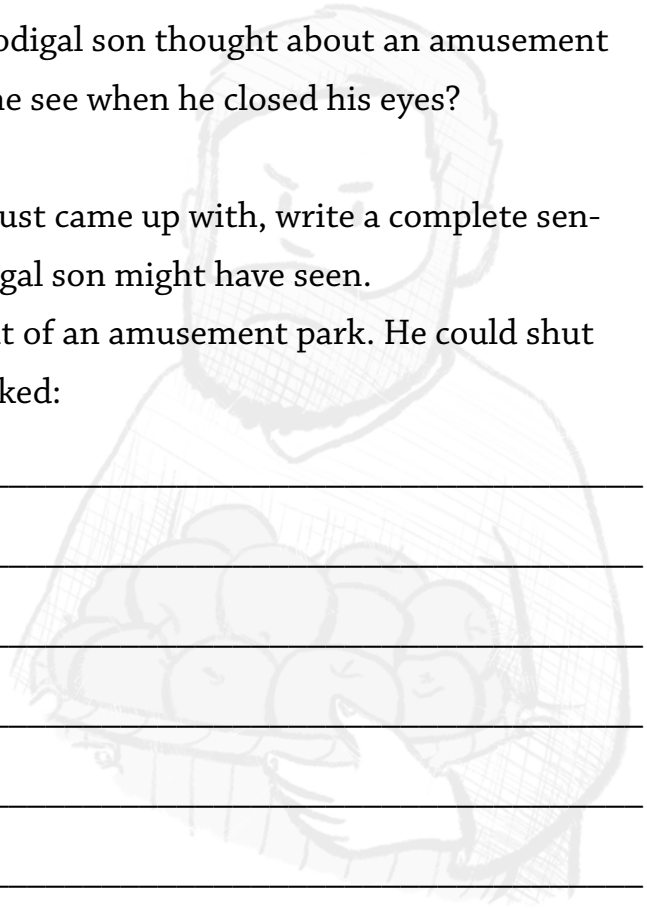
_____

3. **SENTENCE PLAY**—Then the prodigal son thought of home. He could shut his eyes and see how it all looked: the house where he was born, the rooms within, and the table spread for dinner.

   a. What if, instead of home, the prodigal son thought about an amusement park? What three things would he see when he closed his eyes?

      Using the three things that you just came up with, write a complete sentences describing what the prodigal son might have seen.

      Then the prodigal son thought of an amusement park. He could shut his eyes and see how it all looked:



_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. What would the prodigal son see if he thought of a modern city? In a complete sentence, describe what he would see.

Then the prodigal son thought of a modern city. He could shut his eyes and see how it all looked:

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. What would the prodigal son see if he thought of a farm? In a complete sentence, describe what he would see.

Then the prodigal son thought of a farm. He could close his eyes and remember the whole thing:

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. **COPIOUSNESS**—Do you remember the meaning of the word "copiousness"? It means "plenty" or "lots of something." Again, these exercises are designed to help you reach for new words to express the same ideas. The more ways in whichyou can say something, the more lively and exciting your writing will be. Who would be happy with "The weather is good," when one could say, "What a gloriously beautiful day!" Would you say to the hairdresser, "I'd like a nice haircut, please," when you could be precise and say, "I'd like a super short hairdo and please dye it hot pink." To say, "I'm bleeding," is not nearly as helpful as to say, "I've got blood spurting from my left upper arm." Copiousness is important, not only in writing interestingly, but also in learning to say exactly what you mean.

In our first efforts, just as before, we are going to work on exchanging our nouns and adjectives with **synonyms**. A synonym is a word that has nearly the same meaning as another word. So, a "kid" is a "youngster" is a "child"—these are all synonyms.

You can swap these words around. Did the kid like the pickles? Did the youngster like the pickles? Does the child like the pickles? One word may be better than another, depending on the situation, but folks are still going to get the picture. A "brat" is not a synonym for child unless you want to say that all the children in a particular story are brats. This is because a brat is a "naughty child" whereas a child is just a child. He could be well-behaved or naughty.

▶ What are synonyms for the nouns "father" and "mother"? What is a synonym for the adjective "funny"?

Do you remember our definitions? A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. An adjective adds description to a noun and helps us to "see" it more clearly. If you have "true love," "love" is the noun because it is an idea and "true" is an adjective because it describes what kind of love it is.

When in doubt about whether a word might be a noun or an adjective, take a familiar noun, such as "cookie," and place a word in front of it. If the word describes the cookie, then it is an adjective: "new" cookie, "purple" cookie, "big" cookie, "man-eating" cookie, "raisin" cookie.

▶ Circle the nouns and underline the adjectives:

taffy	desk	snake	dangerous	strange	girl
delicious	book	bright	cheerful	sticky	mountain
rude	pastor	baby	sweet	kindness	city
silly	soup	pencil	night	rainbow	chilly

5. Mark the nouns and adjective in the sentence below. Place an *N* over the nouns and an *ADJ* over the adjective.

In that land, there arose a mighty famine.

6. Next, replace the adjective "mighty" with different adjectives that have close to the same meaning. You'll be replacing any nouns below that are left blank with different nouns that make sense.

   a. In that land, there arose a(n) _____ famine.
   (adjective for mighty)

   b. In that land, there arose a(n) _____ famine.
   (adjective for mighty)

   c. In that _____, there arose a(n)
   (noun for land)

   _____ famine.
   (adjective for mighty)

7. Mark the nouns in the following sentence with an *N*. Then, write the sentence three times, adding a different adjective in front of each of the three nouns every time:

The son tended pigs in the field.

Example: The tiny son tended giant pigs in the muddy field.

a. _____

_____.

b. _____

_____.

c. _____

_____.

8. Rewrite the sentence with different subjects. A subject tells what the sentence is about.

   Example: The sheep were chased by the daughter in the pen.

   Rewrite #1: The daughter chased the sheep in the pen.
   Rewrite #2: The pen held the sheep as they were chased by the daughter.

   Now it's your turn. Rewrite the following sentence using the subjects indicated ("the son" and "the field"):

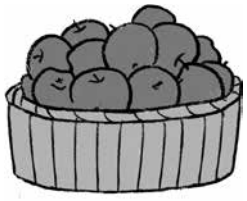
   The pigs were tended by the son in the field.

   a. The son _____.

   b. The field _____

   _____.

9. **POINT OF VIEW**—The prodigal son is told in the third-person point of view: "he," "she," "it," "they." Tell the ending of the parable in first-person view ("I," "we") as if you, the storyteller, are the older brother.

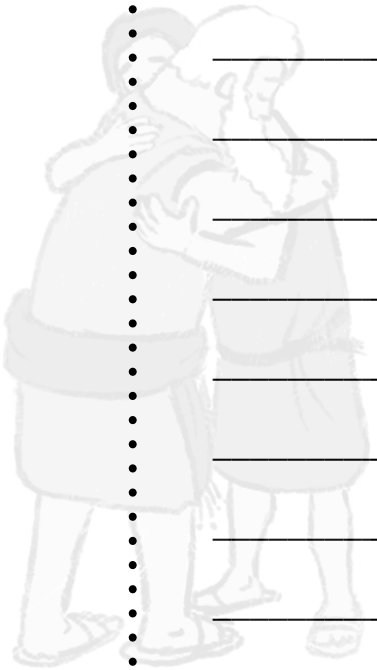


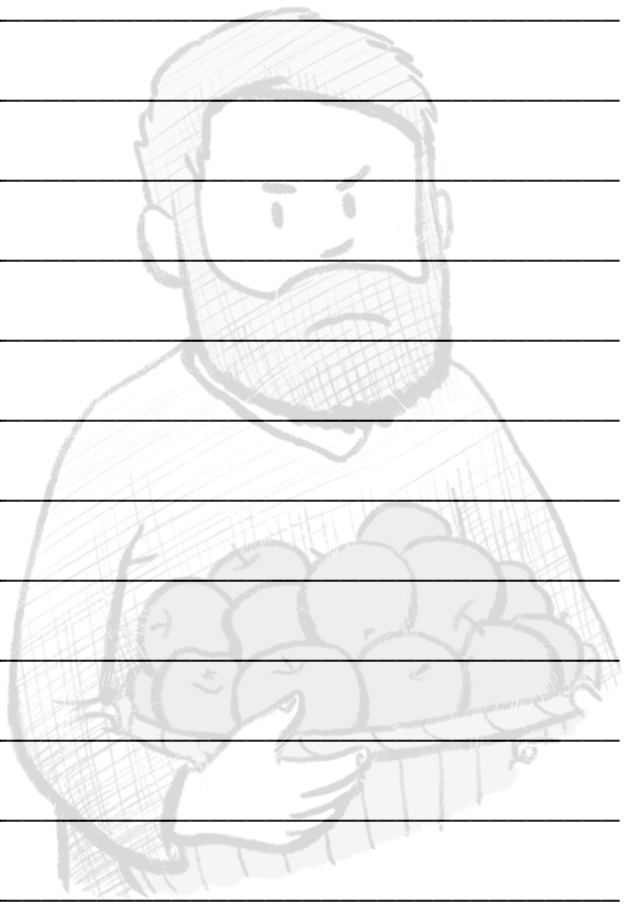
When the older brother came near the house, he heard music and dancing and happy voices. He called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. "Your younger brother has come home," he replied, "and your father has killed a fat calf for a party because he is back home safe and sound."

The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, "Look! All these years

I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never killed even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has thrown away your money with wicked people comes home, you kill a fat calf for him!"

"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we have to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."





Speak It—

Read your retelling of *The Prodigal Son*'s ending to your class, teacher, or recording device. Discuss how first-person point of view changes the parable.

Lesson 3

A Short Parable

In *Writing & Rhetoric: Fable*, we learned that foolish creatures can take many forms. There are stubborn fools such as the ass, quarrelsome fools such as the young bulls, greedy fools such as the dog, and trickster fools such as the shepherd boy. In this lesson, we meet a foolish man who is similar to the greedy dog.

The Rich Fool is another well-known parable from the Christian New Testament. Whereas *The Prodigal Son* and *The Good Samaritan* are two of Jesus's longest parables, *The Rich Fool* is very short. And yet *The Rich Fool* is quite a powerful story for its size.

The Rich Fool

(Luke 12:16-21)

The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.' "

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.

Tell It Back—**Narration**

1. **ORAL NARRATION**—Without looking at the parable, tell back *The Rich Fool* as best as you can remember it using your own words and any words from the

story. For additional practice, record your telling back on your favorite device and play it afterwards.

- Keep the events of the story in their proper order.

Here is the first sentence to get you started:

The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.

2. **WRITTEN NARRATION**

   a. Write your own sentence to tell what happens at the <u>beginning</u> of the story.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b. Write your own sentence to tell what happens in the <u>middle</u> of the story.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   c. Write your own sentence to tell what happens at the <u>end</u> of the story.

   _____

   _____

   _____

Talk About It—

1. Do you remember the fable of *The Dog and Her Reflection*? While crossing a bridge with a bone in her mouth, the greedy Dog saw her reflection in the river.

And then what happened? The Dog dropped the real bone as she tried to steal the bone from her reflection. In what ways is the parable of *The Rich Fool* similar to the fable of *The Dog and Her Reflection*? In what ways is it different?

2. Why do you think God is angry with the rich man for storing up things for himself? What do you think he could have done with his crop instead of tearing down his old barns and building bigger ones?

3. Both the father in *The Prodigal Son* and the rich man in *The Rich Fool* are very wealthy men. And yet the father is a good character and the rich man is a foolish character. How are the two rich men different so that one is praiseworthy and the other is blameworthy?

4. An American named Howard Hughes became one of the first billionaires in history. In other words, he had over a billion dollars or $1,000,000,000 to his name. He owned hotels, movie studios, factories, and airline companies. He should have been fabulously happy, right? Well, Howard Hughes may have been one of the richest men on the planet, but he spent his last years lonely and sad. Like the prodigal son, he couldn't trust any of his so-called friends. Perhaps they only loved him for his money. Would you rather be very rich (like Howard Hughes), very poor, or somewhere in the middle? Why?

Go Deeper—

1. What does this sentence mean? "This very night your life will be demanded from you."

   It means, "This very night _____."

2. What is the main idea of this story?

   a. Store up as much money as you can, for life is short.
   b. Spend money only on yourself.
   c. Never ever enjoy your money or your blessings.
   d. Be generous with the gifts you have been given.

3. Which of these famous sayings do you think best expresses the main idea of *The Rich Fool*?

   a. "Whoever trusts in riches will fall."
   b. "Praise is not a pudding you can eat."
   c. "Never encourage a fool to do wrong."
   d. "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

4. The rich man is called a fool. Write your own definition of a "fool."

   Fool (fül) n. ▶ _____

   _____

5. Now look up the word "fool" in a dictionary and write it down. Is your definition similar to the dictionary definition?

   Fool (fül) n. ▶ _____

   _____

Writing Time—

1. **COPYWORK**—Neatly copy the sentences in the space provided:

   I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry."

2. **DICTATION**—Your teacher will read a little part of *The Rich Fool* back to you. Please listen carefully! After your teacher reads once, she will read slowly again and include the punctuation marks. Your task will be to write down the sentences as your teacher reads them one by one.

3. **SENTENCE PLAY**

In *The Prodigal Son*, we saw how a foolish young man spends his money. In *The Rich Fool*, we see how a foolish rich man gives himself bad advice:

"Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry."

Using the sentence above as a model, fill in new commands for a modern rich man to be giving to himself. What else could he say to show his foolishness? For example, the sentence could read, "Go rest by a swimming pool; sleep, swim, and sleep some more."

_____

_____

_____

4. **COPIOUSNESS**

We learned about synonyms in our last lesson. For example, we know that a synonym for the noun "lollipop" is "sucker." We know that a synonym for the adjective "creepy" is "weird."

As best as you can remember, write the definition of a synonym, a noun, and an adjective in the spaces below. Use complete sentences.

SYNONYM

_____

NOUN

_____

ADJECTIVE

_____

5. Just as nouns and adjectives do, verbs can also have synonyms. A verb is often the action word of the sentence: *run, slide, kick, dance, fly, fall, bump, laugh, cry*. The word "jump" is a verb. Synonyms for jump include "leap," "hop," "skip," and "bound." Underline the verbs, the action words, in each sentence below. These sentences are adapted from Proverbs 14 of the Hebrew Scriptures.

   a. The wise woman builds her house.
   b. With her own hands, the foolish woman tears her house down.
   c. A truthful witness speaks honestly.
   d. A false witness pours out lies.
   e. A wise man shuns evil.
   f. A fool's talk brings a rod to his back.
   g. The lips of the wise protect them.

6. Mark the nouns (2), adjective (1), and verbs (2) in the sentence below. Place an *N* over the nouns, *ADJ* over the adjective, and *V* over the verbs.

   I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones.

   a. Use synonyms to replace the words you marked and rewrite the sentence. Remember that a synonym is a word that has nearly the same meaning as another word.

      _____

      _____

      _____

   b. Use a thesaurus to help yourself write another variation of the same sentence.

      _____

      _____

      _____

c. Using "I" as the subject, rewrite the following sentences but keep the same meaning. A subject tells what the sentence is about.

Example: My geese will be fed by me.

Changes to: I will feed my geese.

My barns will be torn down by me.

I _____

_____

My barns will be built into bigger ones by me.

I _____

_____

7. **AMPLIFICATION**—In many ways, *The Rich Fool* is like the summary of a much longer story—a story that could go on for pages and pages. Don't you want to know why the rich man is so greedy? Don't you want to know if he had a wife and kids? Does he live like king or does he live like a miser, saving every little penny? Details such as these make a story come to life.

Take this parable and write it with more details. What sort of crop does the rich man harvest? How many acres of land does he own? How many servants and laborers work for him? How big are his barns and how much bigger does he want to build them? How does the rich man react when he is called a fool by God? Where is he? In bed? At his dining room table? By his swimming pool?

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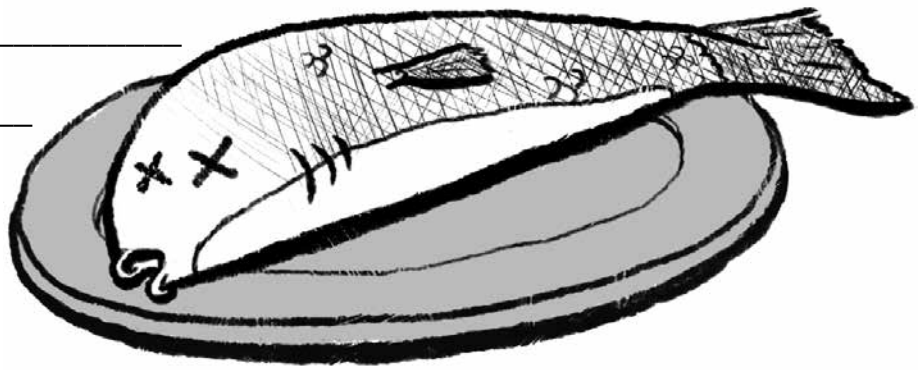

8. Read *The Rich Fool* again. Imagine if the rich man had been a wise man instead of a fool. How would he have spent his money differently? Now write a short story with the same beginning, but a different middle and a different end.

The Rich Sage

Sage = A wise person

The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops."

Speak It—

REVERSE NARRATION

Your teacher will read *The Rich Fool* again. Listen carefully to the order of events: beginning, middle, and end. Now let's try something a little strange. Narrate the parable of *The Rich Fool* back to a partner, a recording device, or to your class going in this order: end, middle, and beginning. Can you do it?