

WORDSMITH SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Wordsmith is written for young people who are just beginning to explore their experiences, feelings and responses. The purpose of the book is to develop confidence in self-expression, first by learning some basic techniques of effective writing, and second by discovering that their own experience contains plenty of material to write about. Some of the topics that *Wordsmith Apprentice* touches upon are addressed more systematically here. Parts One and Two contain exercises and short assignments to reinforce the principles taught. In Part Three, the student moves beyond exercises into longer assignments, developed according to an orderly process of thinking, organizing, writing, evaluating, and re-writing. Every chapter includes a "Just Imagine" exercise or assignment, where the student is encouraged to apply what she has just learned to an imaginary situation.

PART ONE: WORD GAMES

Nouns

Nouns as a major "building block" of language; preferring concrete and specific nouns over general ones; proofreading.

Verbs

Verbs as the other "building block"; action and linking verbs; preferring strong action verbs over weak or linking verbs; using verbs to show emotion.

Adverbs

The function of adverbs; preferring strong verbs over weak verb/adverb combinations

Adjectives

The function and variety of adjectives; the difference between descriptive and qualitative adjectives; over-use of adjectives

Prepositions

The function of prepositions: to turn nouns into modifiers; the flexibility of prepositional phrases

Pronouns

How pronouns are used; the pronoun-antecedent connection; avoiding confusion with pronouns

PART TWO: BUILDING STRONGER SENTENCE

Basic Sentence Structure

Subjects and predicates; fragments

Successful Sentence Construction

Common "weak" constructions and how to avoid them (particularly "it has" and "there is"); sentence transformation techniques; preferring active voice over passive

Making Connections

Coordinating conjunctions; subordinating conjunctions; semi-colons

Combinations

Combining sentences through appositives, relative pronouns, relative clauses, participles and participial phrases

PART THREE: NOW WE'RE WRITING!

Exploring Sensory Experience

The importance of the senses in connecting writer and reader; writing sensory poems

Figures of Speech

What similes, metaphors and personifications are; how they are used

Special Places

The use of sensory impressions in describing a place; first steps in revision

Describing a Person

"Framing" a person at a particular time and place; descriptions of strangers and of people you know well

Narrative Writing I - Sequence and Detail

Telling events in order; the use of sensory images and details

Narrative Writing II - Focus

The importance of narrowing thoughts and impressions to a particular event; finding the focus and holding it; the difference between narrative and summary; writing about personal experiences; advanced revision

Dialogue

What dialogue and how it is indicated; using dialogue to indicate character traits, add interest, and move the narrative along; speech tags and when to use them; interviews; radio plays

Point of View

First, second and third person; imagining and including other points of view in personal narratives

Story

The difference between narrative and plot; basic story structure; re-interpreting personal experience as a story; effective opening sentences and paragraphs

Final assignment: incorporating word choice, strong sentence constructions, effective organization, sensory detail, dialogue, focus, and point of view, shape an incident from your life into a short story.

APPENDICES: How to Proofread; How to Revise; Action Verb List; Student examples; Four Review Quizzes