

Level 6

Second Edition

Student Text

by
Matthew Stephens



Essentials in Writing
Where Students Learn to Write

417-256-4191

www.essentialsinwriting.com

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Printed in the United States of America

*Update April 2016

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LEVEL 6 SYLLABUS
Second Edition

VIDEO – 78 LESSONS
WORKBOOK – 242 PAGES

NOTE: Video lessons are indicated by ALL CAPS bold. Worksheets/assignment sheets are listed below each video lesson.

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***UNIT TWO COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT**
(Lessons 34-72)

FINAL LESSON

Comparing Compositions (2 pages)

SAMPLE

CONTENT

Unit One: Grammar and Other Topics

All lessons within this unit teach students how to *identify* and *apply* parts of speech. Content is divided into two sections:

- I. Parts of Speech
 - A. Identify Parts of Speech
 - B. Common Problems
- II. Tools for Effective Communication
 - A. Apply Parts of Speech
 - B. Apply Sentence Structure
 - C. Apply Figurative Language

Unit Two: Composition

In this unit, students explore many different types of compositions, focusing on the parts of compositions, the writing process, and applying effective writing tools.

Students write *with* Mr. Stephens in a ***step-by-step/modeled*** approach to composition. During the video lessons, Mr. Stephens teaches students information and techniques and ***models*** how to perform each step of the writing process for individual compositions. Students apply what they learn from the video lesson and information presented in the textbook.

Step-by-Step/Model: Through a step-by-step, repetitive process, students internalize the writing process and learn how to perform each step. Additionally, Mr. Stephens models the steps of each composition, showing students “how” to complete them.

Immediate Application: By focusing on each step of the writing process through short, modeled lessons with immediate application, students apply what they learn immediately without becoming overwhelmed by other steps and/or forgetting previous steps. This method increases retention.

ASSESSMENTS

A separate *Assessment/Resource Booklet* is available for purchase. The booklet contains:

- 27 assessments
- 2 comprehensive unit assessments
- resource wordlist
- additional organizers

ACTIVITIES AND ICONS

In Unit One, students learn to identify and apply the parts of speech.



Identify activities help students learn to identify parts of speech in written language.



Apply activities help students identify and apply parts of speech that are tools to aid in effectively communicating with written language. This provides students with tools they will use when writing in Unit Two.

Progression of identify and apply activities within each practice session:

1. Students *identify* parts of speech in sentences.
2. Students *apply* what they have learned through fill-in-the-blank activities.
3. Students *identify* parts of speech in written compositions.
4. Students *apply* what they have learned through fill-in-the-blank, writing sentences, and/or written composition activities.



Grammar Section Toolbox – In Unit One, the toolbox will be present on all “apply” activities. The toolbox serves as a reminder to students that the skills practiced on the page are tools to help them communicate effectively in writing. In Unit Two, the toolbox reminds students when revising compositions to use their writing “tools” to improve communication.

The Writing Process – The icons remind students which step of the writing process they are completing.



BRAINSTORM



ORGANIZE



DRAFT



REVISE



PUBLISH



Extra Practice – After all steps of each composition have been complete and parents or teachers have completed the checklist, students have the opportunity to practice writing another composition of the same type. They read the prompt on the “Extra Practice” page, and, just as before, watch each video lesson before completing each step of the writing process for the new composition. When organizing thoughts, students may draw graphic organizers on notebook paper or use additional organizers provided in the *Assessment/Resource Booklet*.



Resource Folder – In Lesson 22, students are asked to begin creating a “Discarded Word List” and place it in a resource folder. In Unit 2, students are asked to update the word list after each composition. This serves to build a resource file that is helpful for effective communication in the coming lessons and years.

SCORING COMPOSITIONS

Scoring written compositions can be challenging due to their subjective nature. Ultimately, I encourage you to do what works for you, your student, and/or your schooling situation. If you already use a method to score written compositions, stick with it. Along the way, try new methods.

If you use the checklists provided, focus primarily on completion and conversation. Use the checklist as a guide to discuss how effective or ineffective the composition is as a whole and strengths and weaknesses evident in the composition.

Scoring services are available for purchase for levels 9-12. Running from August 1 to May 15 each school year, a certified member of our curriculum department will score written compositions for any or all assignments presented in each level purchased. Visit our website for more information.

There are several different ways to utilize the checklist and hold discussions:

1. Student completes the checklist before turning in the assignment. The teacher spot-checks a few items and asks the student to point to different items on the checklist evident in the composition and explain why the item was checked.

Teacher: "I see you marked that your narrative contains transitions. Show me your transitions." -Student points to the transitions.

2. Teacher checks each item and assigns a grade. This works well when time is limited. Assign a letter grade based the overall composition using the sample composition provided in the key as a guide. Discuss one or more areas that may or may not include suggestions or requested revision.

After completing the checklist, the teacher might say and ask something like:
"I noticed that your hook for your opening paragraph of the expository essay is weak. I think it is weak because you didn't grab my attention. What do you think you could add or change that might help grab my attention?"

3. Assign a completion grade. Use the checklist as a guide to make sure the assignment is complete. Assign any letter grade based on the fact that the student followed each step of the writing process and the composition contains all parts indicated in the checklist.

This option works well when time is limited and the teacher and student want to move on to the next composition.

HOW TO USE


1. **View the video lesson.**
2. **Read the text for today’s lesson.**
3. **Complete the assignment.**
4. **Verbally describe today’s lesson and preview the next lesson.**

How long should my student spend on one lesson?

Depending on the topic and the student, there are many different variables to consider in such a question. Typically, a good rule to follow is: Do not complete the worksheets/assignment sheets unless the student understands the concepts presented in the video lesson. Students may need to watch the video more than once. After an understanding of the new concept is evident, students will complete the activity.

Textbook/Workbook Format

Video lessons and textbook/workbook lessons correspond by title and number.

 Lesson numbers indicate individual days unless the calendar icon is shown. See example below.
(Please note numerical references are for examples only.)

Lesson 8 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 8 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 8.
3. Complete Lesson 8 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next lesson (Lesson 9).

Lesson 9 Day 1 (“Day 1” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 9 Day 1 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 9.
3. Complete Lesson 9 written work for all days with Day 1 calendar icon present.
4. Explain what you learned and preview next activity (Lesson 9 Day 2).

Lesson 9 Day 2 (“Day 2” calendar shown because this lesson has more than one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 9 Day 2 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Lesson 9 video again.
2. Complete Lesson 9 written work for all days with Day 2 calendar icon present.
3. Explain what you learned and preview next activity (Lesson 10 Day 1).

Lesson 10 (no calendar shown because this lesson has only one written activity)

1. Preview Lesson 10 in the textbook/workbook.
2. Watch Video Lesson 10.
3. Complete Lesson 10 written work.
4. Explain what you learned and preview the next activity (Lesson 11 Day 1).

Answer Key

Because some activities require students to compose sentences, paragraphs, letters, essays and such, “Answers may vary” precede such sample compositions. The samples provided are simply for comparison and reference.

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action



An ***action verb*** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It is a tool to communicate effectively with the reader. Choosing an appropriate action verb is important in communicating in written language.

Using creative *action verbs* makes your sentences more interesting and more effective. A specific *action verb* will communicate more meaning and help create descriptive sentences.

Less descriptive: **I gave her the paper and walked back to my seat.**

More descriptive: **I tossed her the paper and strode back to my seat.** (See how this sentence conveys a more specific attitude than the first sentence?)

Action Verbs in Action

Look at the examples below and notice how each sentence is improved by the new action verb.

I sat down at my desk.
I plopped down at my desk.

I looked at the bowl of peas.
I grimaced at the bowl of peas.

Mark gave a sigh and put his backpack on his bed.
Mark heaved a sigh and threw his backpack on his bed.

Did You Know?

Just because a certain *action verb* seems to fit in a sentence and cover the basics of what you are trying to say does not mean it is always the best choice.

Ruthie walked along the path and pulled at her dog's leash.
Ruthie strolled along the path and tugged at her dog's leash.

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

An ***action verb*** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It is a tool to communicate effectively with the reader. Choosing an appropriate action verb is important in communicating in written language.



Complete each sentence with an *action verb*.

1. The boy _____ the ball to his friend.
2. I _____ into the pool and splashed around.
3. Yesterday, Michaela _____ down to the lake.
4. The girl _____ in the bright sunlight.
5. _____ these bags and put them in the car.
6. Alaya _____ a portrait as a gift for her mother.
7. _____ me back my book right now!
8. She _____ as she crossed the street.
9. The wires _____ the speaker to the sound system.
10. The glass _____ after the rock hit it.
11. The student _____ her paper on the teacher's desk.

12. At the pool yesterday, I _____ my friend Scott.

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

An **action verb** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It is a tool to communicate effectively with the reader. Choosing an appropriate action verb is important in communicating in written language.



The sentences below are fragments since they contain no *action verbs*. Rewrite them by adding *action verbs* so that each fragment becomes a complete sentence.

1. My father the day off from work today.

2. You the cat before it ran away.

3. We to the store this afternoon to get ice cream.

4. Paxton his messy room after his mom told him to.

5. She the book back to me after borrowing it.

6. Snow the ground after the drop in temperature.

7. Shauna a big smile after the puppy curled up next to her.

8. The boys stones across the lake.

9. The beautiful music us during the recital.

10. The girl angrily into the room, frowning.

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action



Beware! Dangerous Words Ahead!

Some *action verbs* should be avoided in your writing because they are too bland to properly describe action or they have been used too much in speaking or writing and have lost their effectiveness. Some of these words are **feel, get, go, have, look, say, sit, walk, and want**. When you are writing, use a thesaurus to find words that are more descriptive.

Instead of...

feel



*perceive, sense, consider,
appear, discern, touch,
stroke*

get



*acquire, obtain,
apprehend, receive,
collect, gather*

go



*depart, withdraw, advance,
proceed, journey, charge*

look



*glance, gaze, peek,
examine, ogle, consider,
observe, scan*

say



*utter, vocalize, shout,
mutter, mumble, declare,
respond, add*

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

Some *action verbs* are not as descriptive as others because they can have multiple meanings or have been used too frequently in speech and writing. Avoid these in your writing.



The sentences below contain one *action verb*. Circle it and decide if it is boring or descriptive. If it is boring, write “B” in the blank; if it is descriptive, write “D.”

1. I got the special kind of peanut butter at the store. _____
2. He questioned the methods of his math workbook. _____
3. Look at the preview of this new movie. _____
4. The cat walked on top of the messy table. _____
5. The orange cones impeded the flow of traffic. _____
6. The miniature pony pranced around the yard. _____
7. The sunbeams radiated through the open window. _____
8. Sit down on that couch over there. _____
9. The little girls want a hippopotamus for Christmas. _____
10. I penned my thoughts in my journal. _____

11. The contestants ran as fast as they could. _____
12. She smacked the ball way out in center field! _____

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

An **action verb** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It is a tool to communicate effectively with the reader. Choosing an appropriate action verb is important in communicating in written language.



The **action verbs** are missing in the sentences below. Of the two options given for each sentence, circle the **action verb** that is more descriptive and write it in the blank.

- My mom and I _____ to the store earlier today.
walked / ambled
- She _____ at the fountain with mischief in her eyes.
gazed / looked
- “Somebody kill that spider!” I _____.
squealed / said
- Exhausted, she _____ right on the floor.
sat / flopped
- What do you _____ more than anything else?
desire / want
- I timidly _____ the newborn kitten’s soft fur as I held him.
stroked / felt
- I _____ when the party begins, but she never responded.
asked / inquired
- If you _____ that Superman is better than Batman, you’re crazy.
think / conclude



9. The group of boys was _____ about the plot twist in the movie.
chattering / talking

10. He _____ the piece of chocolate cake in one bite and licked his fingers.
devoured / ate

Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

 **Beware! Dangerous Words Ahead!**



**Use a thesaurus to replace action verbs that are common or bland.
Remove this page and place it in your resource folder.**

Common action verb: **Eli walked down the aisle.**  (*boring and vague*)

Better action verb: **Eli strutted down the aisle.**  (*effective adjective*)

Instead of...

Try one of these...

went



hit



think



smiled



ran



Lesson 19 – Action Verbs in Action

An ***action verb*** is a word that shows the action of the subject. It is a tool to communicate effectively with the reader. Choosing an appropriate action verb is important in communicating in written language.



Underline the verbs in the sentences. Then, look them up in a thesaurus and choose a verb that is more expressive. Rewrite the paragraph using the verb you chose. More is not always better.

Something pulled at the end of Mona's fishing line. She pulled back. Then, the fish pulled back. Quickly, Mona reeled in her catch. She yanked and pulled until finally she saw her big catch on the shore!


SAMPLE



Lesson 37 – Persuasive Paragraph Brainstorm

Persuasive writing convinces a reader using facts and examples to support an opinion.


Not knowing what to write about can be frustrating and time consuming. Selecting a topic based on your prompt using certain tools will make this step in the writing process a manageable task.

 **Brainstorming** is an effective tool to use when choosing a topic. Start by brainstorming a broad range of ideas, and then narrow your ideas to a single topic.

Read the prompt. Then, brainstorm your ideas using the graphic organizer and choose a topic.

What is the best month of the year? Why? Write a persuasive paragraph to detail your answer.

Make a list of your favorite days of the week.



Next, choose three days from the list and record them in the boxes below.

--	--	--

Finally, eliminate two days and record your final choice in the box below. This will be the topic of your paragraph.






Lesson 37 – Persuasive Paragraph Organize

It is very important to *plan* before you write. Your plan will help you to continue in the direction that you want your writing to go and avoid getting off topic. A plan provides you with a solid foundation of content that, when organized, will create the framework of your writing.

You need to plan your opening sentence, several supporting sentences (the details and examples that make up the body of your paragraph), and your closing sentence. Your plan should be written in phrases and simple terms that can later be put into sentences.

Use the graphic organizer to plan your paragraph.

 Write the ideas for your opening sentence to introduce your topic and captivate your reader.	
O	
 Write details to support your topic. Then, write an example for each detail.	
D	
E	
D	
E	
 Write the ideas to conclude your paragraph and bring it to a successful close.	
C	



Lesson 37 – Persuasive Paragraph Draft

Drafting is the simple process of taking the ideas from your plan and converting them into sentences. At this stage in the writing process, it is acceptable to focus on communicating your ideas effectively rather than trying to perfect your writing.

Sample from today's video lesson:

O	December best month
D	Weather and temperatures
↳	E Cold, snow, ice
D	Holiday celebrations
↳	E Christmas, food, presents, decorations, birthday
C	December is the best

Can you convince me?



December is the best month of the year. The weather is absolutely delicious. I love the cold temperatures, and there is often snow and ice. There are also celebrations in December. There are presents for Christmas and lots of food and decorations. Of all the months in the year, December is my favorite.

Draft your paragraph using the information in your plan.



Lesson 71 – Expository Essay

Revise Sentence Structure



Revision is the process of taking what you have written and making changes in order to make your writing more effective. Using stronger verbs, replacing words, or simply changing sentence structure can improve communication.

Remember, you do not have to change *everything* you have written. Simply make changes, where necessary, to **improve** your paragraph.

DRAFT

I can call them. I can send texts. There are chat apps, too. I can even Skype.



REVISED DRAFT

I can call them, send texts, or even Skype at the drop of a hat.

Revise your draft. Start by reading your draft out loud, touching each word as you read. Search for opportunities to add or change words, phrases, or sentences to improve your writing.

Reading your draft out loud and touching each word as you read will help you revise more effectively.

- Touching each word will help you focus on one thing at a time.
- Additionally, you might notice things you didn't see before when you hear yourself read.

Read your draft aloud, touching each word as you read.

Revised sentence structure