Overall Plan

Elementary grades (1-4): Writing with ease
Learning basic grammar and style, basic sentence structure, and paragraph structure.
Method: grammar, copying, and dictation.

Middle grades (5-8): Writing with skill
Learning how to organize sentences into arguments that prove specific points.
Method: diagramming, outlining, outlining and rewriting, narrative compositions

High school (9-12): Writing with style
Learning how to argue original points and ideas.
Method: modelling and the progymnasmata
The steps in writing:

INARTICULATE IDEA ----->
IDEA IN WORDS

IDEA IN WORDS ------->
WORDS ON PAPER
Elementary Grade Students

Three sets of skills taught simultaneously:

- Basic skills in grammar/
- Basic skills in spelling/
- Basic skills in writing
Elementary Grammar

Systematic grammar and punctuation
Goal: explicit knowledge of the rules that govern the conventions of sentence-writing

Grades 1-2: Primarily oral
   *English for the Thoughtful Child*
   *First Language Lessons for the Well-Trained Mind*

Grades 3-4: Move towards written work
   *First Language Lessons*
   *Rod & Staff*
   *Voyages in English*
Elementary Spelling

Beginning exposure to spelling rules and lists
Goal: gaining knowledge of the rules that govern the spelling of English words and the punctuation of written work.

*Spelling Workout* (Modern Curriculum Press)
*Spelling Power* (Castlemoyle Press)

Caution: may not see transference to written work in early grades
Elementary Writing

Putting words on paper: Copywork

First grade: Copy sentences every day from good writers
Second grade: Write single sentences from dictation
Third grade: Write two to three sentences at a time from dictation
Fourth grade: Write paragraphs from dictation

Purposes:
Create a visual memory of proper written language
Form a visual picture of proper written language from spoken words
Hold words in head long enough to get them down on paper

Techniques:
Repeat until student can repeat back to you
Warn student of upcoming punctuation challenges
Use your voice to indicate punctuation and other elements
Give all necessary help in spelling and punctuation

Tuesday, May 29, 12
Elementary Writing

Putting ideas into words: Narration across the curriculum

First and second grade: Narrate to parent
Second and third grade: Narrate to parent and take dictation
Fourth grade: Narrate to tape recorder

Purposes: Develops skill in original expression without demanding creativity in content
Teaches student to identify the central elements of narratives

Techniques:
First through third grade: Guided narration
Fourth grade: Move away from guided narration
Summary of Elementary Writing

**Basic grammar**
- Primarily oral, Grades 1-2
- Move towards written, Grades 3-4

**Basic spelling**
- 2x per week

**Copywork/Dictation**
- History, literature, science
- 3x per week

**Narration**
- History, literature, science
- 3x per week
Middle Grade Students

Basic skills in spelling/
Basic skills in grammar/
Basic skills in writing
Middle Grade Spelling

Continue with spelling program

(Spelling Workout, Spelling Power, or other)

Begin list of frequently misspelled words

Help student transfer rules knowledge to written work by finding the rules that govern misspelled words

Troubleshooting

Change program
Have student copy misspelled words 10x
Ask student to write rule governing misspelled word in margin
Middle Grade Grammar

Systematic grammar and punctuation
Goal: explicit knowledge of the rules that govern the conventions of sentence-writing

Additional goals: expertise in diagramming and outlining

Resources:
  Rod & Staff
  Voyages in English
  Shurley English
Purposes of Diagramming
Understanding the logic of sentences
Developing a method of self-check

GOOD SENTENCE

Our prayer and God’s grace are like two buckets in a well: while the one ascends, the other descends.

BAD SENTENCE

In *Pride and Prejudice*, her mother’s bad manners and wishing to get married made Elizabeth discontent.
Our prayer and God’s grace are like two buckets in a well: while the one ascends, the other descends.
In *Pride and Prejudice*, her mother’s bad manners and wishing to get married made Elizabeth discontent.
In *Pride and Prejudice*, her mother’s bad manners and wishing to get married made Elizabeth discontent.
Purposes of Diagramming
Understanding the logic of sentences
Developing a method of self-check

GOOD SENTENCE

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.

BAD SENTENCE

To my perspective Rudyard Kipling approached the genre fiction to its fullest.
In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit
To my perspective Rudyard Kipling approached the genre fiction to the fullest.
In addition to the city, Theodore Dreiser’s society is depicted in its people.
Diagramming Resources

Rod & Staff
Voyages in English
(Advanced Language Lessons)

The First Whole Book of Diagrams, Mary Daly
hedgeschool.homestead.com
Purposes of Outlining

Provide the student with a model for constructing logical narratives

I. MAIN POINT
   A. First supporting point
      1. Additional information about first supporting point
         a. Detail about that additional information
   B. Second supporting point
      1. Additional information about second supporting point
      2. More additional information about that second supporting point

II. NEXT MAIN POINT
Outlining Resources

Rod & Staff
Voyages in English

Note Taking & Outlining

schoolspecialitypublishing.com
Grammar: 3x per week, 30-45 minutes

Spelling: 2x per week, 30 minutes

Writing?
Middle Grade Writing

Fifth and sixth grade: learning to outline, while continuing to write narrative summaries as in third and fourth grade

Seventh and eighth grade: rewriting from outlines

INARTICULATE IDEA → IDEA IN WORDS

IDEA IN WORDS → WORDS ON PAPER
One-Level Outline

A sentence/phrase that identifies the passage’s most central thought (NOT a sentence that contains most of the information in the paragraph.)

Useful questions:
1. What is the main thing or person that this paragraph is about?
2. Why is that thing or person important?

Two-Level Outline

The most important details about each term in the main point

Three-Level Outline

Additional details
Life in China under the Mongols was much like life in China under earlier alien rulers. Once order was restored, people did their best to get on with their lives. Some suffered real hardship. Many farmers had their lands expropriated; others were forced into slavery or serfdom, perhaps transported to a distant city, never to see their family again. Yet people still spoke Chinese, followed Chinese customary practices in arranging their children’s marriages or dividing their family property, made offerings at local temples, celebrated New Year and other customary festivals....Teachers still taught students the classics; scholars continued to write books; and books continued to be printed.

I. Life in China under the Mongols
   A. Difficulties caused by Mongol rule
      1. Lands expropriated
      2. Slavery and serfdom
      3. Transport to distant cities
   B. Persistence of Chinese customs and traditions
      1. Chinese language spoken
      2. Chinese customs observed
      3. Festivals celebrated
      4. Students taught
Using the outlined text as a model

I. Life in China under the Mongols
   A. Difficulties caused by Mongol rule
      1. Lands expropriated
      2. Slavery and serfdom
      3. Transport to distant cities
   B. Persistence of Chinese customs and traditions
      1. Chinese language spoken
      2. Chinese customs observed
      3. Festivals celebrated
      4. Students taught

Historical time frame
The negative aspect
details
The positive aspect
details
Goals of middle grade writing:
Learn to construct outlines through modelling
Learn to write from outlines through modelling
Begin to write responses to literary works
BEGINNING LITERARY ANALYSIS

Whom is this book about (central character)?
What does he/she/them want?
What keeps him/her/them from getting it?
How do they get what they want?
Do they have an enemy or enemies? Is there a villain?
What does the villain want?
What do you think is the most important event in the story?
What causes this event to happen?
How are the characters different after this event?
How many different stories does the writer tell?
What is the most important thing that happens to [pick a character].
How does it change that character?
1. Begin by writing narrative summaries as learned in elementary grades, 1-2x per week (choose from history, literature, or science), not more than 1/2 page.

2. Work towards doing a two- to three-level outline of 1-3 pages (depending on density) of nonfiction reading, 2x per week (outline itself should be 1/2-3/4 page)

3. Write one “literary” essay, 1x per week.

4. When outlining skills are in place, drop narrative summaries and rewrite from outlines/on model of outlines in history or science, 2x per week.
High School Writing

Continue skills in spelling/word study

Reinforce skills in grammar

Develop skills in persuasive writing
Spelling: transition into word study

*Vocabulary from Classical Roots*
*Vocabulary notebook*

Grammar: continue with upper-level program for reinforcement

*Rod & Staff*
*Analytical Grammar*
*Stewart English Program*
*Warriner’s English Grammar and Composition*
High School Writing

1. Study of rhetoric, 2-3 hours per week

2. Two 1-page persuasive papers per week in history, science, or literature

3. Longer research papers in history, science, or literature
   Two ninth-grade papers, 4-8 pages
   Two tenth-grade papers, 5-10 pages
   1 eleventh-grade paper, 12-15 pages
   1 twelfth-grade paper, 12-15 pages
Study of Rhetoric

Progymnasmata: a set of writing exercises intended to equip the student with a “toolbox” for persuasive writing.

For example: Slanted and direct narratives

A dog was sitting at the side of the road. A man walked up, put a collar on the dog, and took the dog away.

A mutt was crouching at the side of the road. A dog-trainer approached cautiously, managed to get a collar around the dog’s neck, and dragged the dog away.

A St. Bernard was sitting on the side of the road, wagging his tail. His owner rushed up, put the dog’s collar on, and led him away.
Self-Study in Rhetoric

Anthony Weston, *Rulebook for Arguments*
Frank D’Angelo, *Composition in the Classical Tradition*
Thomas S. Kane, *The New Oxford Guide to Writing*
Edward Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*

Read a section of the text, outline its content, and then do the exercise; if not exercise is provided, write a paragraph illustrating the technique or find an example.

3-5 hours per week
Two one-page persuasive papers per week in history, science, or literature

Learn how to formulate and support a thesis statement.

A proposition that you can defend
A statement that you can either prove or disprove
An assertion that has to be supported by evidence.

NON-THESIS STATEMENTS

*Homer and William Blake both talk about nature.*
*Jane Austen’s characters can’t be open about their feelings.*
*Hamlet had a fatal flaw.*

ASK:

How are these things the same, and how are they different?
Why?
When?
THESIS STATEMENTS

How are these things the same, and how are they different?

_Homer sees nature as a hostile force to be reckoned with while Blake sees nature as a friend of man_

Why?

_In Pride and Prejudice, Elizabeth pretends to conceal her feelings, but she actually reveals them to Mr. Darcy in many subtle ways._

When?

_Hamlet is sane throughout most of the play, but goes mad during the duel._
Finding topics in history:

Question motivations of historical actors

Argue that place and/or weather affected the outcome of an event

Argue that one event was caused by a previous event

Prove that a certain group of people was better or worse off after a certain event

Show a connection between two events or people in two different countries

Speculate on how history might have changed under different circumstances
Finding topics in literature:

Discuss some element (scene, plot, or character) that are either interesting or annoying. Explain, using quotes from the work, why it interests or annoys.

Compare the work with something else (anything else) and draw parallels.

Point out how some metaphor or technique is used in the work, and explain

Argue that one of the characters acted in a way that is ethically right or wrong
Finding topics in literature:

Discuss some element (scene, plot, or character) that are either interesting or annoying. Explain, using quotes from the work, why it interests or annoys.

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Point out how some metaphor or technique is used in the work, and explain

Argue that one of the characters acted in a way that is ethically right or wrong
Finding topics in science:

Focus on discovery/invention:
What was the need for the invention?
Why did the scientist look?
(What question was he trying to answer?)

Focus on theory:
How has this theory changed the way we think?
Is the change good or bad?
Longer research papers

Two ninth-grade papers, 4-8 pages
Two tenth grade papers, 5-10 pages
1 eleventh-grade paper, 12-15 pages
1 twelfth-grade paper, 12-15 pages

Informational, not persuasive

Goal: learn how to find and use sources, proper documentation

Opportunity to explore a topic of interest

Techniques for research papers:
Schaum’s Guide to Writing Great Research Papers