

# Chapter 3: Frequently Asked Questions

Note: This chapter was taken from a language arts group I moderate and, thus, is written in a conversational tone.

**Can you tell what the differences between the levels are? I am confused as to what level to order for my students.**

The major differences among levels that you should be aware of include the following:

## **Pre A--2nd and 3rd grade skill levels**

- First two weeks, the student writes sentences only (not paragraphs) for his composition assignment.
- The last two weeks, he writes one paragraph only. (Occasionally, Extension students write two paragraphs.)
- His dictation quiz is fill in the blank, not straight dictation.
- The passage sentences to learn to copy, dictate, etc. are six to twelve words in length, usually contains no compound sentences and very few sentence openers
- The passage paragraphs are three to six sentences in length.
- This is a very gentle introduction to English and a good place to start for the student who can just now read picture books on his own (not just vocabulary-controlled readers).

## **Level A--4th and 5th grade skill levels**

- First two weeks, the student writes one to four paragraphs for his composition assignment--- usually from Key Word Outlines over the passage.
- The last two weeks, he writes two to five original paragraphs in which he writes creatively or finds source material for his assignment.
- The passage sentences are generally six to twenty-four words in length.
- The passage sentences *do* contain compound sentences and openers as these are taught here.
- The passage paragraphs are four to ten sentences in length.
- You can use this with younger children as long as you go slowly with them...maybe a couple of sentences per week at first. (Only use for very beginning writers if attempting to group your student and then modify as needed for younger ones.)

## **Level B--6th-8th grade skill levels**

- First two weeks, the student writes three to six paragraphs for his composition assignment--- usually from Key Word Outlines over the passage.
- The last two weeks, he writes three to ten original paragraphs (depending on type of report--- biographies are generally easier and longer in length) in which he writes creatively or finds source material for his assignment.
- The passage sentences are ten to thirty words in length.
- The passage sentences contain advanced sentence structures (appositives, openers, semicolons, colons, etc.).
- The paragraphs they write for reports are ten to twelve sentences in length.

## Level C--High School skill levels

- First two weeks, the student writes three to eight paragraphs for his composition assignment--- usually from Key Word Outlines over the passage.
- The last two weeks, he writes six to sixteen paragraphs in which he writes creatively or finds source material for his assignment.
- The passage sentences are up to forty words in length.
- The passage sentences contain all major writing components, including double openers; compound sentences containing "three sentences" combined; split quotes; and single and double quotations, as well as various sentence structures detailed in Level B's description (appositives, openers, etc.).
- The application step here (via the Checklist Challenge) is much more demanding and challenging.

## How is CQLA multi level within the levels?

CQLA has four levels of books: Level Pre A (2nd and 3rd grade levels); Level A (4th and 5th grade levels); Level B (6th-8th grade levels); and Level C (9th-12th grade levels). Within each of those levels there are three breakdowns that you decide at which level your student will work: Basic level--Basic (those just beginning that level); Extension level---E (those who have done that level before or are further in their language arts studies than a Basic student); and Further Extension---FE (those who are furthest in their language studies of that book's level).

The levels within the book levels (Basic, Extension, and Further Extension) are based on applications of the skills learned. Here are some examples of this application:

1. In spelling, when students learn the *i before e, except after c* rule, a Basic student in level B might have to learn to spell the words *believe*, *receive*, and *rein*. Extension students would have those words as well as *believable*, *receipt*, and *grievous*. Further Extension students would have advanced words containing that rule, plus some that break that week's spelling rules.
2. In grammar, all students might be required to write with double and triple adjectives in sentences, but the E and FE students will be required to use double and triple adjectives that they have never used in writing before (using a thesaurus).
3. In the Editor Duty assignments (the part of each weekly lesson in which students find errors in given paragraphs), the Basic students only find errors in one paragraph; E's find them in two paragraphs; FE's find them in three---and the errors get increasingly difficult in each paragraph. (For example, a Basic Level B student might have to find a punctuation error in a subordinate clause opener sentence, but an FE student (since he has probably had two years of CQLA and has learned about subordinate clauses in various places) would have to find punctuation errors in the last paragraph that are not just in subordinate clause openers, but also in subordinate clauses in the middle and end of sentences.
4. In composition, more advanced students have to do the following: (1) Write more sentences; (2) Write sentences that contain advanced sentence structures (dialogue, for instance); (3) Write openers and closers when the younger students do not, etc.; (4) Use more sources, write more paragraphs, etc. (5) Make more analogies, comparisons, and writing with various literary techniques.
5. In editing via the Checklist Challenge (CC), the level differences really come into play as this is one of the primary applications of all grammar and language arts learning: applying it to the student's writing. In the CC for a given week, a Basic student may be asked to add a quotation to his essay; an Extension student may have to write two quotations by two different speakers; a Further Extension student may have to write using a split quotation.

6. The differences in levels within the levels continue as the student takes his spelling test and dictation quiz at the end of the week. Basic students take spelling tests over the words they were given and the dictation quiz over the first copy box; Extension students have the Basic words and the Extension words and take a dictation quiz over two of the copy boxes; Further Extension students have all of the spelling words and take dictation over all copy boxes.

### **How can I learn to be a better CQLA teacher?**

First of all, I want to encourage you that once you "learn the ropes," you will always have the same format, the same order, the same style of lessons, etc. in all CQLA's for all levels! Thus, trying to stick with it during the learning curve can be extremely valuable for homeschooling moms. I will enumerate some answers below.

1. If you want to learn more about what a weekly lesson should look like, you may want to order the CQLA demonstration video from Training for Triumph for \$15.00. It shows me teaching two of my Level B students one entire weekly lesson (in a very fast forty-five minutes!). With the video, you get the weekly lesson that correlates, so you can follow along with me and my students. I think just seeing it in action helps tremendously and answers so many of the beginning questions (including "Which passage?").
2. We have a three-tape cassette series entitled The Almost Three R's in which I describe how to teach spelling, grammar, and composition. This cassette series is available for \$12.00 and comes in a three-cavity cassette holder. It is unrelated to CQLA in that it does not reference the program, but the concepts CQLA ascribes to are elaborated on in it.
3. We are developing all day language arts workshops in which I describe how to use CQLA, give moms a "Grammar 101" lesson, teach editing and revising strategies, and have editing/revising sessions with small groups. This workshop will be appropriate for CQLA and non-CQLA users, so you would be able to bring friends along who are not using CQLA too. Contact us to set up a workshop in your area.

### **Are we really supposed to get all of the CQLA weekly lesson done in only one week?**

The weekly lesson looks overwhelming at first, especially if you start to count the number of "lesson items" that a student is to complete in one week---often as many as twelve to fourteen items. In comparison, consider the total number of pages your student would be doing in a week if he had a vocabulary program, spelling program, grammar program, and composition program. It would look overwhelming too!

All of those four English components (and more, including comprehension of material, editing, revising, etc.) are woven throughout the weekly CQLA lesson. Thus, it looks like a lot of work at first. If you follow the weekly lesson plan given at the back of each CQLA monthly unit, you will have no trouble completing all of the assignments within the week, allowing the following timetables to complete everything:

- a. Level Pre A---second and third grade skill levels:
  - Twenty to thirty minutes per day total time
  - Nearly all of this time with his teacher
  - He may copy passages and write some sentences on his own, but for the most part, this level is pretty teacher-intensive--though the daily time is short due to the student's age and skill level.

- b. Level A---fourth and fifth grade skill levels:
  - Thirty to forty minutes per day
  - Half or more of that time with his teacher; up to half of that time may be independent, depending on his skill level.
  
- c. Level B---sixth through eighth grade skill levels:
  - Forty-five to sixty minutes per day
  - Teacher assistance for two or three of those sessions, depending on skill level---for Checklist Challenge (CC) help, to help in editing his essay, to give spelling test, to read dictation quiz, etc.)
  
- d. Level C---high school skill level:
  - Sixty to seventy minutes a day
  - Teacher assistance for one or two of those sessions, depending on how independently this student checks his assignments, completes his CC, etc.

### **What is the right time to begin CQLA Pre A?**

Pre A is for second and third graders who can read fluently---at least picture books. A child who cannot read a word should never be asked to spell it (unless it is built into his phonics program as he learns to read). A first grader who learned to read in pre-school or kindergarten (and can truly read---not just *Bob Books*), could use Level Pre A. I am of the "better late than early" mentality, so I would never put a first grader in Pre A (or any formal language arts program), but then I've never had an early reader either. Prior to my development of CQLA, my second (and often even third) grade students did not do a formal language program -- since most are too intensive for young readers and writers.

### **Can I really drop my other language arts programs if using CQLA?**

It is often shocking for a mom to think of her various English programs---and the time (and number of books!) being replaced by one, albeit large, book. The answer to this question is not cut and dry.

Yes, you can do CQLA with no other language arts programs in elementary and junior high---except for reading. Children who are still learning to read at higher and higher levels should read aloud to Mom until all phonetic skills are mastered for decoding (reading). This may be through third, fourth, or fifth grade. Then, a child should at least do silent reading from then on. This could be a reader, a devotional, a content area book (social studies, science, health), or one of each. Of course, the student in all levels of CQLA is also supposed to read the entire passage (all copy boxes) each day too. Truly, CQLA *does* cover all skills outside of longer reading selections.

In high school, language arts gets trickier. You have myriad language arts courses to choose from: Grammar and Composition (such as CQLA), composition only (like IEW, *Writing Strands*, or our composition-only books, *Meaningful Composition*, grammar only, (The latter is not recommended unless it is for college preparatory, such as SAT/ACT prep, etc. as it does not help them in real life much without being connected to writing), literature, specialty writing (fiction, poetry, technical, editing, etc.), speech, debate, and more.

When using CQLA for many years, students will probably get done with their "Grammar and Composition" portion of high school English early. Then, of course, you should take into consideration their interests (fiction writing, love of literature, etc.) as well as their future studies (speech and debate for college preparation, SAT preparation, research paper writing, etc.).

It would also be possible to simply do CQLA for all four years of high school English, add a literature course, and be done. This would probably not prepare a student for college, however, since the student will have no speech background or research paper writing. (CQLA does contain research-based writing assignments with up to three sources, but it does not contain a “term” paper for college prep with footnotes, etc.)

The point of this is that yes, CQLA can be your sole language arts for second through eighth grade, along with reading. Then, you need to figure out what language arts your high school student will do for his four years (eight semesters) of high school English. Certainly, CQLA can be a big part of this too and will be a great help in preparing your student for college or whatever is ahead for him. Level C is definitely not easy---and is very challenging in grammar and composition. The lengthy reports are good preparation for any college writing with their emphasis on prewriting skills, research, and revising.

### **What will my children do next year if they do the Red Series this year?**

CQLA entails three complete series for each level. Each series (for all four levels) has eight units with eight different character qualities, major focuses, etc. Each book of eight monthly units will be different than the ones from the other two series. Thus, if your students used Red Series this year, next year they may use Blue Series or Green Series at whatever levels they are ready for. It doesn't matter which series you use at any time (Red Series, Blue Series, Green Series), except you want to use a different series each year, so you have all new lessons and character qualities--at each student's level.

The key to understanding the series of CQLA is to be sure that you do two things: (1) Keep all of your students in the same series, so everybody is studying the same character qualities, scriptural principles, and major focuses at the same time; (2) Move your students into whatever level they are ready for, regardless of the series they are using. (In other words, don't think of any series as being more difficult than another--and think your child does a series because he is "ready" to "move up." Moving up is moving from Level Pre A to Level A; Level A to Level B; Level B to Level C--not from one series to another.)\*

\*Note: Red Series, Blues Series, and Green Series were originally called Volume I, Volume II, and Volume III. Because the volume numbers made parents think of *levels*, the volumes have been changed to series colors-- a titling move that does not denote order (since it does not matter which order you complete the CQLA series--they are just the way the character qualities are divided). So...for returning CQLA families, volumes and series are equivalent as follows:

Red Series---formerly Volume I  
Blue Series---formerly Volume II  
Green Series---formerly Volume III

### **How important is the *Spelling Notebook*?**

The *Spelling Notebook* (SN) is a separate book that correlates with CQLA. Over ninety spelling rules are included in the *Spelling Notebook*, and each page contains a Teacher's Tip that explains that page's rule for the teacher. Each week as part of the student's spelling lesson, he is told to turn to certain pages of the SN containing that week's rule(s), and record his words in the correct column (*g* says *guh*; *g* says *juh*, etc.). Only one *Spelling Notebook* is needed per student for all of your student's CQLA years as it covers spelling rules for grades two through twelve and is made for long-term use.

The *Spelling Notebook* (SN) is another means of categorizing spelling words. CQLA can be done without it, but doing so would be equivalent to skipping some of the spelling worksheets in a "workbook-type" spelling program.

The SN gives students the opportunity to do many things: (1) Interact with their words another time; (2) Think about the word spellings and patterns; (3) Classify like spellings together (which helps cement spelling learning); and 4) See how past words are spelled with the same or similar spelling patterns and commonalities as current words.

**Note:** If your junior high or senior high student is a strong speller who seldom mis-spells words while writing, you may choose not to have him or her use a *Spelling Notebook*.

### **Where can I find the answers for the students' grammar lessons?**

The *Teacher's Guide* is just an overview of how to use the program, a master Checklist Challenge, a Scope and Sequence chart of the lessons in CQLA, this FAQ section, a sample lesson, etc. It is similar to a writing handbook. It doesn't have anything to do with the actual CQLA units in that nothing in any specific unit is also in the *Teacher's Guide* (outside of the sample). The answers for all the grammar lessons are in the back of each monthly unit of CQLA--in the back of the student's book. There are also weekly lesson plans for each weekly lesson located with the Answer Keys (in the students' books) that moms can pull out and use themselves or that students can use for their weekly "to do" list.

### **What do you recommend if CQLA simply does not work for our family?**

If you have tried CQLA for three or four months, getting additional help from tapes and advice via email from Training for Triumph, it might be that CQLA simply isn't for you. There is not one particular curriculum that fits every family perfectly. If I weren't using CQLA, I would go back to the curriculum materials that CQLA was modeled after, together with our composition-only books, *Meaningful Composition*. Follow these tips:

1. For a very young student, it might just be that your student is not ready for formal language arts. If you suspect this might be the case, focus on building reading fluency, and use something extremely fun and low-pressured for your students to build early language skills, such as *Five in a Row* or the very first *Learning Language Arts Through Literature* that does more reading together and discussing the materials than it does actual "grammar and composition." Be sure this student reads everyday (preferably two or three times a day) and works out of a manuscript penmanship book if his small motor skills are adequate.
2. For upper elementary students, I would combine *Meaningful Composition* (at his writing level) with a spelling program for either one semester (working thirty minutes a day in *Meaningful Composition*) or for an entire year (working at a much slower pace). Either way, I would have the student read a couple of times a day, at least, from readers, content area books, Bible story books, etc.
3. For intermediate students who do not know the basics of sentence writing, paragraph writing, and multi-paragraph writing, I would begin with *Meaningful Composition 4* (along with spelling), for remediation for two to three months. At that time, I would put the student in *Meaningful Composition 6* and (at the same time) do a straight-forward grammar-only program, like *Easy Grammar*, along with spelling.

4. For advanced students, I would do remediation as described for intermediate students, if needed. (Older students should be able to complete *Meaningful Composition 4* as remediation within a month or two.) If the advanced student is ready for the longer writing demands (four to twelve paragraphs of five to ten sentences each), I would put him in *Meaningful Composition 8*, *Jensen's Grammar*, and spelling (if needed) If spelling is not needed, I would add *Jensen's Vocabulary* to the mix. (Book 6 of *Meaningful Composition* may be used for older students who are not ready for the writing in *Meaningful Composition 8*.)\*
5. There are one month samples of all levels of CQLA at our website to print off and try. In addition, there are samples of the lessons in all three levels of *Meaningful Composition*.

\*Note: *Meaningful Composition 4*, 6, and 8 may be used for writing remediation as they go from sentences to single paragraphs (Book 4), from a paragraph to multiple paragraphs (Book 6), and from multiple paragraphs to more research-based writing and extensive creative writing (Book 8).

CQLA uses the "Teach, Practice, Apply" approach to learning and teaching. Basically, that means that a grammar item is taught in CQLA (using rhymes, jingles, mnemonics, sentences from the reference materials, etc.), then the student "practices" his grammar---through practice sentences taken from character-related materials, recitation of the grammar items, making Grammar Cards, etc. Finally, he applies it. This is the step that disjointed grammar programs miss. The student needs to take his newly-learned grammar skill and apply it in his own life. Thus, the Checklist Challenge was born!

As far as pacing of grammar in CQLA, each grammar item is taught at each level in which it is taught, at least two times per year. Because of the "unit study" approach in CQLA---and the fact that the grammar is based on the passages at the beginning of each week---and those passages are based on the character qualities, grammar is not presented in a nice, simple package like it is in *Easy Grammar*. Because grammar is learned in the grammar lessons as well as through the Checklist Challenge, it will seem like you are just "jumping in" to grammar at first. You will wonder how in the world your student is supposed to know what subordinate clauses are when he doesn't know what a noun is yet! However, because the grammar is taught in context and because each grammar item is repeated twice each year and because he applies it in his writing every week, it will all fit together by the third or fourth month.

I have always encouraged home schooling moms to do whatever works. I would be a hypocrite to change that advice now---just because I love CQLA! I would like to encourage moms to try CQLA in its entirety (after gently beginning, of course) for three full months before taking away parts and adding other things. At that time, I say, "Do whatever works for you!"

The benefits of CQLA are based on doing it in its entirety. For example, you will lose any of the following by dropping or adding to it:

- a. Dropping the grammar parts and adding another grammar program---You will lose the "oneness" of the all-inclusive language arts program that I desire for moms to have. I want things to be easy for all of you! I want you to love school. I want your children to love school, love CQLA, love learning, and love writing. Adding another program can be stressful, and if it's more stressful than doing the grammar in CQLA, then it's not worth doing. Also, here you would lose the benefit of "applying" the grammar items to his writing via the Checklist Challenge since whatever is taught in grammar each week in CQLA is included in that week's Checklist Challenge.

- b. Skipping the writing parts of CQLA---CQLA is first and foremost a writing program. Spelling, vocabulary, and grammar are taught in it simply because they are tools for students to learn/refine to become excellent writers. If I could only recommend one part of CQLA, it would be the composition sections! Writing (and reading) is so crucial to learning and becoming a life-long learner. Students need to write, write, write and read, read, read!
  
- c. Using a different spelling program---Spelling is the one area of the four major areas taught in CQLA that can be most easily skipped and another program implemented. Obviously, I think learning the spelling words in context, learning them in a word family approach, categorizing them in the *Spelling Notebook*, etc. are the best ways to learn spelling; otherwise I would have written a different type of spelling program than what is in CQLA! However, many moms who want CQLA are satisfied with two popular spelling programs---*Spelling Power* and *Alphabet Zoo*. Doing a separate spelling program (and skipping CQLA's spelling portion) is not out of the question since spelling is not as dependent upon the other language arts components as grammar, vocabulary, and composition are to each other. Again, do whatever works best for your family.

### **What advice do you have for someone beginning CQLA?**

The best advice I have for someone just beginning CQLA is to move slowly in the beginning. One of the biggest difficulties people have with CQLA is starting! (Isn't it like that for everything?) It is especially true when facing sixty to ninety pages that are to be done in one month's time---and many blanks to be filled in, reports to write, etc.

I remind families over and over again that CQLA is at least comprised of four different curricula: vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and composition. If you were to stack a curriculum for each of these four areas up beside a year's worth of CQLA, you would see that CQLA is not that overwhelming after all.

While it is true that CQLA is four curricula in one, it is also true that many homeschoolers normally only do one or two of those at a time, and seldom do all four at once. CQLA wants to change all of that! Comprehension is too linked to vocabulary not to do them together; spelling is too linked to copying not to do those together; grammar is definitely too linked to composition not to do those together.

So..my first bit of advice in beginning CQLA is to move slowly. The first week only do vocabulary, copying, spelling, and one grammar assignment. Next week do that, plus the Key Word Outline and rough draft. The next week, when it's time to start the two-week essay, do everything except one grammar lesson. And so forth.

Or, you could take six to eight weeks to do the first CQLA and spread each "one week" lesson out over two weeks.

Lastly, you could just do the first two weeks of the unit over the first month, and the next month just do the last two weeks of the unit. With this method, you would be familiar with all four weeks of a CQLA unit, but it would be spread out over two months. This would be a gentle introduction that even younger students could probably handle.

### **What advice do you have for beginning CQLA with a second grader who's eager but does not seem to be able to handle a lot of writing yet?**

Move your second-or third-grade student into CQLA slowly, and only assign the projects he can easily handle (or give him another year to play Legoes with little brother!). In the beginning, you may want him to copy just a sentence or two of the passage, learn only a few spelling words each week, do small portions of the grammar assignments, and dictate his essays to you orally. He may need to write the final copy of his report one paragraph per day (or even less). Treat him with understanding and give him every opportunity for success.\*

If you sense that the pressure of CQLA is making your young learner hate school, stop doing it for a few months! Read real books; do real math; take dictation as he narrates to you after you visit the zoo. Do everything in your power to make him love school and love learning. Language arts can come later.

\*Note: We highly recommend that you print off the one-month CQLA Sample at our website for your Pre A students and "try before you buy." Working through this one month sample together slowly will show you whether or not your early elementary student is ready for formal language arts.

### **How should I set up my language arts sessions to utilize my time better---and make my older students independent in their learning as much as possible?**

There are many ways you may set up your teaching of CQLA. You may choose to use one of the plans outlined here or choose another plan that works for your family. Work within your family's circumstances and enjoy teaching your children!

1. Meet daily with your students---One method for teaching CQLA is to meet daily with your students in each level of CQLA for a certain amount of time, covering as much as you can during that time and giving your students "assignments" to be done on their own while you help another student. The benefit of this approach is that you are communicating with your students each day, checking their assignments as completed, and giving them feedback continuously. The drawback to this approach is that your students may not be able to work independently on language arts if, for some reason, you are unable to meet with them on a certain day. If having language arts sessions with all of your students everyday is feasible for you, this approach is beneficial; however, it is not required for the success of CQLA.
2. Set up tutoring sessions--Another method for teaching CQLA, one that the author has used with positive results with her test students, is to structure your language arts meetings much like tutoring sessions. For example, you might have two 45-minute meetings each week with your older students and three 30-minute meetings each week with your younger students (per CQLA level). In this approach, you teach all of the skills out of the weekly lesson that the student will need to learn in order to do assignments until you meet with him again. This approach is especially good for intermediate and secondary students as it causes them to work independently. It is a good approach for a busy mom since it allows her to spend more quality time when she does meet with her students, and she can stagger her language arts "classes." You might try a combination of daily meetings with your younger students and "tutoring blocks" with your older students to see which method works for you.
3. Have your older students work independently. Finally, Level B or Level C students may work independently on CQLA, reading the material, completing the assignments, checking the answers to his assignments with the Answer Key, writing reports and essays, studying spelling words, and so forth. Assignments requiring your assistance in these levels are marked with a (T) at the beginning to indicate that you will need to check his report, give him a dictation quiz, or give him a spelling test.

**If I decide to use CQLA Pre A for my younger students and WBLA (*Wisdom Booklet Language Arts*, the sister curriculum to CQLA for ATI families only) with my older students, how can I know which CQLA units are the same as which WBLA units?**

CQLA Red Series is WBLA 9-16 (CQLA Red 1 correlates with WBLA 9, etc.)

CQLA Blue Series is WBLA 17-24 (CQLA Blue 1 correlates with WBLA 17, etc.)

CQLA Green Series is WBLA 1-8 (CQLA Green 1 correlates with WBLA 1, etc.)

**We started CQLA and were immediately overwhelmed by it. Do you have any suggestions for those of us who really want to make it work for our families, but just cannot face that lengthy weekly lesson?**

Here are some tips to help the overwhelmed mom:

1. Start at the beginning of a week and work through as much as you can get through. Do not beat yourself up if you do not finish everything each week during the first few weeks.
2. Skip all Optionals in the beginning. They are just that, and you do not need to be concerned about them at first. (Some moms do not consider it real grammar if students do not write sentences using the grammar items. I do not consider it real grammar if students do not use the grammar in their writing. Thus, I rarely do the Optionals at all, but I "opt" for more real learning by better application of the grammar skills through the Checklist Challenge.)
3. Work with your student on any areas that are new to him. Many students are not used to doing grammar or that much writing. Ease your reluctant writer gently into CQLA. This usually means helping him with his Key Word Outline and Checklist Challenge! You can gradually wean him away from your help.
4. Focus on learning. Focus on understanding the passage and rewriting it. Focus on seeing how prepositional phrase openers fit into his own writing, etc. rather than just completion of the material. Yes, it will be a while before he remembers all the grammar information, but by applying it to his essays, he will remember much more than simply highlighting them in sentences.
5. Do each unit in two month's time rather than one month for the first couple of units.

**Since the first two weeks of reports each month are similar to the *Institute for Excellence in Writing* program, do my students need to go through that program first to be successful in CQLA?**

Only two of my current eighteen tutoring students have ever used the IEW writing program, and they all have good success with CQLA writing. One of the goals of the writing sections in CQLA was to make it as directed as possible. Thus, each sentence is laid out for the students. Each paragraph is narrowed down as far as its contents. Each opening paragraph is thought out with notes first. It is not necessary to do IEW before doing CQLA.

**You mentioned that CQLA is modeled after some of your favorite language arts programs. How did it come about?**

Seven years ago, we felt called to write a language arts program for families in the Advanced Training Institute (ATI) program that correlated with their unit study curriculum. We began writing the sister program to CQLA, called *Wisdom Booklet Language Arts*, at that time. When I began writing for ATI, I had done years and years of private tutoring, had success with my children's language arts development, and had used the best of the best language arts programs (in my

opinion): *Jensen's Grammar*, *Understanding Writing*, *Play 'n Talk* (reading/phonics program), *Tricks of the Trade*, *Writing for 100 Days*, *Learning Language Arts Through Literature* (LLATL), *Editor in Chief*, *Easy Grammar*, and more. I knew what I liked about each of those programs---and what I didn't.

After I began writing WBLA, the IEW program became famous in many home schooling circles. I had already decided at that time to have two easy reports per month based on the passages (like LLATL, sort of) and to have one longer essay or report each month in which students would learn the various types of writing (like *Writing for 100 Days*' reports, sort of). I watched the first set of IEW tapes at that time, and thought, "Wow, that Key Word Outline makes more sense than using a formal outline for the first two reports in WBLA." I also had a checklist (Checklist Challenge) already in place that I had used with my tutoring students (especially the non-IEW items like redundancy, thesaurus use, vocabulary use, etc.). After watching the IEW video, I added sentence openers and banned words. Basically, CQLA/WBLA is a combination of all of the parts of the programs that I felt worked for my children and my hundreds of tutoring students and test students over the past ten years:

1. *Learning Language Arts Through Literature* (LLATL)---Use of one passage throughout the whole week for all learning, but LLATL wasn't meaty enough, didn't incorporate character qualities and scriptural principles weekly, and didn't have enough writing (or directed writing) to suit me, though every edition of this program gets better and better, and I still think it's a great program.
2. *Understanding Writing*---I love all the techniques for writing the author teaches in that big binder, but it's too much work for Mom to "make up" lessons as she goes. I wanted something parents could hand to middle school and high school students with no preparation and little explanation.
3. *Editor in Chief*---Excellent editing course (like Editor Duties in CQLA)--but I think the content that students edit should be more worthwhile!
4. *Jensen's Grammar*---Here's where I got the idea to teach Preposition-Check Sentences and a whole lot more. This is a solid grammar program for upper level students--but, again, it's disjointed--you still have to add writing, spelling, and more. (I had all of these books going at one time for my kids!)
5. *Writing for 100 Days*---This is a great tool for moms---but it's just a tool. Each section teaches how to write a certain type of writing; however, it's not "guided" in that a student can't use it alone very well. (Its sequel, *Fairfield's Guide to Writing*, is equally good.)
6. *Play 'n Talk*---The word family approach to learning to read found in *Play 'n Talk* is excellent. I have used that same approach to create the spelling portion of CQLA. (Note: This is the same approach most successful spelling programs use, including *Spelling Power* and *Alphabet Zoo*.)
7. *Tricks of the Trade*---A spelling categorizing book, much like CQLA's *Spelling Notebook*. The problem is that you find words to plug in and decide where they should be plugged in. That is time-consuming for Mom and difficult for students. In CQLA, students are told on which pages to record their spelling words.
8. IEW---It was and is great! I wanted to take IEW one step further by having the writing all laid out for the students, giving them source material to write from, and giving them weekly checklists (that include the grammar they are learning) during the first two weeks of each unit. A student in CQLA doesn't have to come to Mom and ask, "This has too many words to make a KWO with only four words, what do I do?" Or, "What do I do with the semicolon in this sentence?" etc. I wanted it all laid out for the students and moms. (Additionally, I feel that students need to learn a large variety of outlining methods and writing types (not just KWO reports and essays). Thus, the last two weeks of each CQLA unit contains original reports and essays.)

9. *Easy Grammar*---I liked that *Easy Grammar* taught isolation of prepositional phrases first off. This is important in finding other parts of speech, so CQLA uses that approach (and has also added the isolation of subordinate clause openers since students often think the main subject is in the subordinate clause opener). However, hand-in-hand with learning prepositional phrases, a student needs to learn infinitives (to + verb). Otherwise, he will be isolating infinitives as prepositional phrases, and may isolate the sentence's main verb! In addition, I like the friendliness of *Easy Grammar* (and the rhymes, etc. to learn various parts of speech). I have tried to make the grammar in CQLA similar to the friendliness of *Easy Grammar*---with the addition of grammar *application* to their writing.

**Level C is high school level, correct? Is the work challenging enough to stand alone as a LA program for high schoolers and provide enough to be counted as "credits" for my college-bound student?**

Level C is very challenging for freshman and sophomore students---and depending on how much language arts (and especially writing) students have had---it can be challenging for eleventh and twelfth grade students as well. We do CQLA for ninth and tenth grade at least. Then we do research paper, story writing, literature, editing, speech, and debate for the remainder of our students' English in high school. However, most of my own children have done two to four years of English during each year for the first three years we began writing for ATI---to test the programs. Thus, that would not be typical. I have many eleventh graders in my testing classes (to test the programs); most twelfth graders are doing literature or speech, and/or going to college as early-entry students. If your level C student has not written every week for the last couple of years prior to CQLA, CQLA will continue to challenge him for three or four years of high school with the extensive writing portions and the grammar applications.

**My child gets distracted so easily, and since CQLA has all four areas of language arts (and thus requires thirty to sixty minutes per day, depending on level), how can I keep his interest while working for those long periods of time?**

As for distractions, keep your sessions short but frequent for your younger student. He might be better off meeting with you for five to eight minutes in the morning and again in the evening to read aloud. He might be better off having two short language arts sessions---one in the morning and one in the afternoon---rather than having a long one all at once.

Also, be sure to mix in learning activities that utilize his strengths, such as listening to biographies or historical fiction on cassette, watching nature and science videos, etc. Do not depend on reading and even being read to exclusively for his learning. Many parents forget that there are other avenues for learning besides sitting in one place with books and workbooks in front of the student. Do not depend on an avenue that is unusually difficult for your child for all of his learning, or he may start despising school and learning early on---something you want to avoid at all costs.

Also, help him become more responsible for his work by meeting with him on things that must be done together, then having him mark "homework" assignments with sticky notes. He should have an "independent work" time in which he copies his passage, studies his spelling words, does the vocabulary assignments, etc. During these independent sessions, he can vary what he is doing (copy the passage today, write spelling words out tomorrow, etc.). This will help his work not to be so overwhelming as it is spread out over the day.

### **What is a whiteboard?**

A whiteboard is a wipe and write board. You use dry erase markers on it. There are 12" x 18" ones that you can hold up while sitting at the table. Some moms use wall mounted ones. The white board, also called a dry erase board, is basically the modern day chalk board.

Office supply stores sell "white board paper" with sticky backing that can be adhered to cardboard or light press board. It comes in a pack like laminating sheets. This would be much less costly than paying ten or fifteen dollars for a small hand-held (12" x 18") one, and you could even make each student one to practice spelling words on, etc.

### **What is a minit-book?**

A minit-book is a little booklet the student makes out of paper with tag board or construction paper on the outside. The simplest version of this is when a stack of typing paper with tag board on the outside is folded in half and stapled (like a half page book). Then the student writes vocabulary words and definitions, stories, reports, Scriptures, spelling words, etc. on the inside. Of course, there are variations of this, too. It is just a fun way to show a finished product, etc. Dinah Zike, the author of *The Big Book of Books*, has a web site for more help and ideas. You can get to it at [www.dinah.com](http://www.dinah.com) or call 1 800-99DINAH Dinah-Might Adventures, P.

### **What can I do about the three-punch holes ripping in my children's CQLA books?**

It is recommended that you just give your student one monthly unit of CQLA at a time to put in a half inch binder (preferably with at least a front pocket). This way, he has enough space to add lined paper, research printed off the internet, and other work he does on additional paper. If he is given only one unit at a time, he can probably get by with a half inch binder, which will be easier for carting around and working anytime! Also, the three-punch holes will not rip as much without all the tugging throughout the year.

Another idea is to have him keep hole reinforcements (little round stickers with holes in the middle) in his three-ring binder's pocket for the times that he pulls too hard or one of his holes tears accidentally. These are handy for repairing those rips, and many of my "testing" students keep these in their binders.

### **Is it necessary for my student to outline his original reports?**

The benefits of outlining for an original report are plentiful. Consider these outlining tips when weighing its pros and cons:

1. Outlining notes are for the student. They should be written in a form that best helps him write. Moms often have our own ideas about how "the outline" should look! However, that might not be the most useable form for the student. Let him use whatever method is best for him--- whether it's formal outlining, bullet points, full sentences, smileys and stars, or something totally different.
2. Outlining gives the student the opportunity to see if what if he thinks he wants in his essay is really what he wants without writing everything out in long sentences. Oftentimes students say things like, "I started out writing about XXXX, but then when I was writing down the notes, I realized.....(a) I didn't have enough information for an entire paragraph; (b) I needed to have

two paragraphs of that information; (c) It wasn't logical; (d) It didn't have enough to do with what I had just planned for the previous two paragraphs, etc. When a student writes everything out in sentence form, then realizes what he has written isn't going to work, he is often too discouraged to start over, etc. With outlining, he can discover inconsistencies and other problems early on.

3. Outlining teaches the student that a paragraph is all about one aspect of the essay or report. More than anything else, outlining's greatest advantage is probably helping students see that a paragraph is a unit of thought. CQLA uses paragraph by paragraph outlining methods. When the student decides what a paragraph will contain, he begins to understand that everything he puts in that paragraph must support or expound upon that topic. When he writes his "topic of the whole paragraph" on the outlining line, he is committing to writing about that topic in that paragraph. Everything he plans to put into that paragraph must relate and support that topic. When it doesn't, a student will often say, "Oh, that can't go in that paragraph. It doesn't have anything to do with that topic." It helps him gather information for his report because he is looking specifically for data that supports and expounds upon that topic.
4. Outlining keeps the student from plagiarizing. When a student takes information from a source (or sources) and plugs it into his outline, he is comprehending information and writing it in outline/note form---hopefully in as few words as he can to still be able to write from it. Then when he takes those notes and writes his own paragraph, he turns the notes into his own words (as much as possible). It is very difficult for a student to write straight from a source without plagiarizing because the material often sounds better the way the author has written it. It isn't that the student is trying to steal another's words. It is just difficult to make it sound as good in his own words. Outlining helps reduce plagiarizing by forcing the student to put the information into notes first, then into his own words, thus placing him one step further away from the original material.
5. The student should be able to write his report using nothing more than his outline (unless he has referenced a quote or verse in his notes). A good question to ask your student after he has written an original writing is as follows: "Could you write using only your notes, or did you have to look back in the source to write?" Good note takers will learn that they need to put enough information to write straight from their notes but not so much information that they are writing their essays and reports in their notes! Encourage your students to reference verses and quotations they want to use, and look those up when writing, but otherwise, you want them to be able to write their reports using their notes---not the source(s).
6. Outlining helps the student in his research process. He can see at a glance if he has enough information for what he is writing about. When a student's "sentence lines" are not filled in or only partially filled in, he knows he still needs more information about that topic.
7. Outlining helps him organize his information sequentially, etc. Organization of the student's writings is often based on how well a student outlines. When students get out of the outlining mode and start "free writing," you can tell! When questioned about their outlining method, they sheepishly may answer that they didn't have time to outline, etc. but had to write quickly. Guess what? It showed. The organization of students' essays when they do not outline is generally very poor. They have a tendency to ramble. They often put things in paragraphs where they do not belong because they "just thought of it" and stuck it in wherever they were!

Outlining is one of the key elements in the writing process. Help your students become excellent outliners, and they will become excellent writers!

### **What if we do not get the whole unit done within one month?**

There are eight monthly units in one CQLA book, translating to thirty-two school weeks. Of course, most school calendars are thirty-six weeks in length. Thus, there is leeway to take longer on a monthly unit if desired. Some families spend five weeks on a monthly unit, using the fifth week to finish the original report and read extra books about the topics introduced in the unit--as well as write book reports over those books. Others spend the designated four weeks on each unit and use the remainder of the school year to perfect their favorite reports, read books and write book reports, or finish other subjects.

It would be better to finish only seven units in an academic year, but finish them completely than it would be to do all eight units but skip parts since all areas of language arts are interrelated in CQLA. A student will gain more from doing a unit thoroughly (and thus reaping the benefits of having all language areas interrelated) than from doing two units less thoroughly. Also, when moms skip parts of a book, we have a tendency to skip the most laborious parts! Thus, what is often skipped is the original writing and Checklist Challenge that goes with that essay or report. It is important that students learn to write all of the writing types in CQLA, and skipping the original writings would not help meet this goal.

### **How do I count CQLA for my student's high school credits?**

Completing one year of CQLA in high school is like completing any high school grammar course and high school composition course simultaneously. It is recommended that a student's transcript not list the book titles or have any other "unprofessional" or "cutsie" names for the courses taken in high school. Thus, when your student completes a year of CQLA Level C during his ninth grade year, it is recommended that it be listed on his transcript as one full year of grammar and composition and be titled something like English Composition I or Grammar and Composition I. (The Roman numeral represents the year of high school the course stands for---first year (ninth grade), second year, etc.)

Also, many families count Level B "Further Extension" as their student's first year of high school grammar and composition (including the author's family). It is recommended that when a student begins doing high school level work, it count towards his high school credits, regardless of the student's age or grade.

### **My student really dislikes copying the passage. How important is it to copy the passage each week?**

Each weekly lesson has a passage that relates to the corresponding character quality, scriptural principle, or life principles. These passages may be fiction, non-fiction, poetry, Bible passages, hymns, biographies, journal entries, newspaper articles, or anything else that pertains to the corresponding character quality, etc.

The first part of the week, preferably the first day, your student will read the entire passage and copy the portion for his level in his notebook. Your student should check his copy, paying special attention to whether he has spelled everything correctly, punctuated properly, indented accurately, lined up appropriately (if it is poetry), etc. Discussion as to why that type of passage is written that way (poetry lines all beginning to the left, dialogue starting a new paragraph with each new speaker, etc.) is included in the lessons, so do not be concerned if you are not sure which things to point out in your student's copying.

Do not underestimate this portion of CQLA: copying good writing is a powerful learning tool that helps students become proficient writers. It might seem like a simple task that only takes a small amount of time, but remember, in addition to just copying the passage, your student will be using that passage to learn many language arts skills.

Another reason it is vital to copy the passages is that in the first two weeks of each unit, the students' essays and reports come from these passages. Comprehension of the passage is crucial to a good rewriting of the passage. When a student works with the passage throughout the week (copying, highlighting spelling words, finding grammar items, etc.), his comprehension of the passage will increase, which will help him in writing his Key Word Outline and report for that week.

Note about handwriting difficulties: If your student is unable to copy the passage due to learning problems associated with handwriting, do not have him copy the passage and force him to tears. Many dyslexic and dysgraphic students have difficulties with copy work. In these cases, try to help your student learn to type as soon as possible, and then make his copy work part of his typing practice. Or, if possible, have him just write a portion of the passage each day, as he is able. Be sure, however, to always have your student read the passage (all parts) daily.

**I'm having trouble giving dictation to my student. I either go too fast or too slow, or he loses his place on his paper, etc. How can I improve this?**

At the end of the weekly lesson, your student will take dictation on this week's passage. Students should take dictation on only the portion of the passage they copied on the first day of the lesson (Basic, Extension, or Further Extension). Dictation may seem like a difficult task at first, but as your student grows accustomed to the dictation quizzes, he will progressively gain confidence. Remember that he will have studied the details of the passage (why there is a comma before the coordinating conjunction, why the quotation begins with a capital letter, etc.) throughout the week as he completes his assignments. Your student will gain an understanding of how the passage is written before he takes dictation on it.

During dictation, read the whole passage to your student to remind him of its content before he begins. Then read the first sentence to him, pausing for the commas and dashes and stopping for other punctuation. (For the first few years, you may want to say "pause" when there is a comma and "stop" when there is a period.) Re-read it a few words at a time (or more, if he is older and can handle more at once). If dictation is really a problem, try just doing a few sentences this week, and increase the length as you and he both improve in your dictation skills.

Note: For lengthy passages, it is not always necessary for Further Extension students to take dictation on all of the paragraphs. Taking dictation on four paragraphs or more would become extremely laborious for both of you.

**My student doesn't want to take notes. As he puts it, he "just wants to write."**

That is exactly what my first born used to say all the time. He would always beg me to let him just write the essay or report then take notes from his writing, so he would truly have an outline to go with his report---just in reverse order! Now, he has written numerous articles, portions of books for Training for Triumph, and is finishing up a novel. He teaches writing classes for Training for Triumph's cottage classes, and he would have a fit if one of his students pulled the outlining stunts that he tried to pull when he was in high school! He recently told me that now he could never write anything he writes (and he writes a lot!) without outlining first.

Prewriting exercises prepare the student to write by helping him think through the topic, organize his thoughts, see the amount of "space" (number of sentences, number of paragraphs, etc.) he will have available to write about his topic. Prewriting study skills include outlining, note taking, writing paragraph notes for paragraph formation, etc. These are skills that will help students become proficient at organizing their thinking, planning their writing, designing paragraphs, writing Key Word Outlines, and much more.

When a student does not outline his writing first, many things can happen: his essay will not be focused, he will ramble on and on, he will leave out important parts, he will try to write too much and tire out, etc. His paragraph breaks, balance in the lengths of his paragraphs, and more are all very dependent upon the outlining process.

### **How is the Checklist Challenge supposed to work---and how can I help my student get used to using it?**

In each CQLA weekly writing lesson, you will find a Checklist Challenge (CC) designed to help your student edit and revise his writing. Editing and revising are often weak areas for young writers. CQLA gives concrete help in the areas of editing and revising. It assists in editing by helping the student correct usage errors, identify misspellings, check punctuation, etc. CQLA also teaches the student how to revise his essays by applying editing strategies; avoiding redundancy; and creating titles, openings, and closings.

After your student writes his weekly writing, he will be directed to revise it using that checklist. Your student will be directed to place a checkmark in each box each time he completes a CC item. The boxes represent the number of times he is to insert that revision into his essay. For example, if he is asked to insert an adjective in each paragraph and his essay that week is four paragraphs long, there will be four check boxes for him to check. After a couple of weeks of using the CC, your student will be able to revise his writings efficiently with this method.

For the first few Checklist Challenges, you will want to help your student. It will be challenging to rethink all of those grammar items and apply them to his writing. This is truly the highest form of learning---application. At first, it will feel as though you are the one completing the Checklist Challenge! That is okay. Modeling is the best way to teach the Checklist Challenge.

You may desire to teach your student to color-code his Checklist Challenge and revisions. This is highly recommended as it helps him see at a glance what revisions he is still in need of, and it helps you be able to check quickly that all of the revisions are done. It takes more time in the beginning to do this, but it will be very worth it for the next several years of essay writing. For example, you might make a "color chart" for all of your students to follow or use the CC Coding Chart provided in Chapter 17.

Thus, when it comes time to check your student's essay, you will have the report on your right (for example) and his CC on your left. You can simply cross check from the CC to the report. "Here he has a blue highlight in the box, so his inserted verbs should be blue highlighted. Okay, he has a pink squiggle under the box for the topic sentence, so his topic sentence must be underlined in pink squiggle." etc. It may be difficult to begin this concept at first, but it is very worth it over the long haul.

### **How should I grade my students in CQLA?**

CQLA uses a Teach-Practice-Apply method throughout each weekly lesson. Keep in mind that you should not "grade" a student during the learning process (the "Teach" or "Practice" portions). Grading is for final products.

The "final" grades for each week may come from the following:

1. Spelling test
2. Dictation Quiz
3. Researching and outlining report
4. Writing the rough draft
5. Completing the CC
6. Final essay and implementation of the Checklist Challenge in the final essay (actually two grades)

### **What essay and report types are included in all the levels of CQLA?**

There are many report and essay types taught over the course of all three series of CQLA. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Story
2. Allegorical story
3. Personal essay/journal/testimony (narrative)
4. Biographical report
5. Instructional
6. Informative / Expository
7. Persuasive
8. Persuasive letter
9. Friendly letter
10. Business letter
11. Dialogue
12. Poetry
13. Comparing/Contrasting
14. Analogies
15. Biblical re-telling
16. Allegory
17. Cause and Effect
18. Scientific informative
19. Historical informative

### **My children and I are having difficulty coming up with opening and closing paragraphs. Do you have any suggestions?**

I will enumerate some tips below concerning both opening and closing paragraphs---using a darling report in Level A as our example. (Some of my fondest memories from the first year of writing/teaching WBLA/CQLA eight years ago come from this report. The kids were just so new to writing and tried hard to succeed. They were so proud of these clever openings for it. I can still hear them during the break when they were playing outside telling each other what they were going to do for the opening! Isn't teaching our children the most blessed job anyone could have?) Consider these tips for writing opening paragraphs:

1. As for the note taking of the opening, it is too difficult and laborious for students (especially Level A) to write out every line of a poem or song they want to open with in their notes---and it's just not needed. Also, it squelches their creative juices because by the time those little cuties have that whole rhyme copied over from the book, they forgot what else they wanted to say about it!! Because of this, I recommend just referring in their notes to what they want to quote from: a song, rhyme, Bible verse, etc. (See sample below.) When they write out their report, they can use the source book or Bible to write it out word-for-word.

2. The note taking for the opening and closing has many purposes:
  - a. To keep the opening and closing concise. Without the note taking, many students will just ramble on and on in their openings without really giving a "punchy" opening at all.
  - b. To keep the opening and closing about what the report is about.
  - c. To let your student formulate a plan for his opening/closing. It doesn't have to be word-for-word what he will be writing, but just a general gist of what his opening will contain.
  - d. To let him see that the contents of a paragraph should all be the same topic. A paragraph is a three+ sentence unit of thought, etc.
  - e. To let him jot down what he wants his opening to contain without using too many words, getting bogged down, etc.
3. I like to walk my young students through their openings---with questions, of course! Our dialogue might go something like:

Mom: Read your report to me, so I can hear what the whole thing is about.

Child: Okay. Ants work hard and live long. Bees live only a short time, etc. etc.

Mom: Here are some suggestions on how to start your report. See if you like any of these:

-Song: Ants Go Marching Two by Two

-Scripture: Go to the Ant, You Sluggard

-Statistic: Did you know there are more ants in the world than people?

-Other: Description of picnic---ants invade, etc. etc.

At this point, he usually talks about it.

Child: Well, I like the song, but I don't see how I could just write a song and make it fit. I like the statistic, but that's only one sentence long... etc. etc.

Mom: You choose the one you like best, and we'll make it work together.

(I should say right here, that I'm not always this sweet when we are doing reports....lest you get the wrong impression of me!!!)

Then he might choose the Scripture.

Child: I like the Scripture

Mom: How does that Scripture apply to your report?

Then, of course, all of our near-genius children come up with something like this.

Child: Well, ants live a long time, organize, and work hard, so there is a good reason the Bible says to go to them and watch them.....And a sluggard is especially lazy, and he would need to know about ants, so he could quit being so lazy, etc. etc.

What bright young writers we have!!!!

Mom: Good. Those sound like super-duper thoughts to put in your opening, Let's jot those down.

4. Now, after walking through this process and discussing it, his opening paragraph notes might look like this:

Sent 1: Bible says go ant, sluggard (Proverbs 6:6-8)

Sent 2: Sluggards lazy

Sent 3: God knows if lazy person watches ant, will learn

Sent 4: We can learn from ants

Sent 5: We can learn from comparing ants and bees

5. Here is my opening:  
The Bible says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Proverbs 6:6-8). A sluggard is very lazy. God knows that if a lazy person will watch an ant, he will learn how to work. We can learn from ants. We can also learn from comparing ants and bees.
6. I helped him add that last sentence, reminding him that his report was about ants and bees. I kind of even told him that it might work there. Alright, I told him the whole sentence, then wrote it for him since he asked me ten times how to spell *learn*!!! (Remember, modeling is a powerful teaching tool!)
7. There you have it! I do closings very similarly. I encourage the students to use quotes, statistics, songs, rhymes, hymns, poetry, Bible verses, sayings, etc. as these are often springboards that get the student thinking. We have books of statistics (*Kids Almanacs*---available reasonably at wholesale clubs), books of quotations (several of these for speech and writing---sometimes also available at wholesale clubs), poetry books, children's rhymes books, hymnals and children's song books, etc. all to aid in this process. (These are also good books for beginning speech writing, especially the quotation and statistic books.)
8. Below is another sample opening paragraph, again about the ants working hard.  
Sent 1: Children often sing silly song  
Sent 2: (Words to one verse: "Ants Marching One by One")  
Sent 3: May seem like silly song, but believed ants really are organized  
Sent 4: Bible says ants work and work  
Sent 5: We can learn from studying God's creatures  
  
My paragraph:  
There is a little song that children everywhere like to sing. "The ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah; the ants go marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah..." This may seem like a silly song, but ants are believed to really march, work, build, and more in an organized way. The Bible says that ants work and work. We can learn about the character of diligence that God wants us to have by studying God's creatures---even ants and bees.
9. Okay, I'm on a roll here. I'm just itching to do a closing:  
Ants and bees have different characteristics. They work differently---and live differently. I hope I can be a hard worker like the ant, for truly, the ants go marching one by one, hurrah!
10. Don't forget to add the title: "The Ants Go Marching One by One" by Donna Marie Reish.  
(Kids love their full names on their writings!!!)

**We were hoping to use the spiral-bound index cards for our Grammar Cards, but the cards are hard to locate quickly when they are bound and not in order. Any suggestions?**

If you use the spiral-bound index cards, it is difficult to put them in ABC order. In that case, I save a few pages at the beginning and have the student make an ongoing Table of Contents. I label the first card A-C, the next D-G, etc. until I have a spread of cards labeled with letter spans at the top.

Then, I have them number the remaining pages in the spiral bound cards, so they can assign a page number to each card. As they make a card, they put it on the next blank card, but they record its page number on the proper Table of Contents page. For example, they write "Coordinating Conjunctions" at the bottom of the A-C Table of Contents page, and record the page number where that card can be found. This way, even though their cards are not in ABC order, they can look them up in their Table of Contents and find them easily.

My real preference is to use the two-holed index cards with the companion binder. This way, as they make a card, they can stick it in in alphabetical order.

Either way will work, and each one makes a nice collection of Grammar Cards for a usage handbook for the students. Watch our newsletters and web site for forthcoming pre-made, spiral bound Grammar Cards that you can purchase for each student to have the ready-made cards with grammar rules at their finger tips.

### **How can I help my student locate his verbs more quickly when doing his Checklist Challenge?**

One of the things I like to do when working on the CC with a new student is to write the Be, a Helper, Link (BHL) verbs on the white board for him (or use our forthcoming Checklist Challenge posters with the BHL verbs listed on it). Then I tell him that we are looking for any of these, plus any "action verbs"---things you do. I keep reminding him of this as we highlight his verbs--and I also remind him that to+verbs are verbs too (infinitives)---and can be BHL or action verbs.

### **I saw highlighters on your list of Optional Materials to Use CQLA, and I wondered if you could elaborate on just how you use those and how necessary they are.**

I will give a brief background about the highlighting before I answer your question since new moms might not know about that. In the weekly CQLA passage, the student will highlight various spelling words and parts of speech throughout a weekly lesson. The first time your student highlights something, the color of highlighter will not matter; however, the next time he highlights something in the passage, he will want to use a different color, so that when he checks his answer with the Help Box, he can just look for the pink ones or orange ones this time, etc. Thus, he will not want to use the same color highlighter for that passage all week.

In addition to that highlighting, in the Checklist Challenge your student will be told to (1) circle his verbs with one color, (2) insert an adjective in each paragraph (and highlight it so his teacher can check it quickly), (3) highlight a boring verb in each paragraph and change it to a different verb, etc. etc. When he highlights in his CC, it will be much simpler for Mom to check his revisions if he "color codes" those changes. Thus, when he circles his verbs in yellow, he should circle the check boxes in the CC column for that with a yellow highlighter. Then, Mom can see that his verbs are circled in yellow highlighter---just by looking at his CC for that week. This will make checking revisions so much easier for you! (Also see the CC Coding Chart provided in Chapter 18.)

### **How should I go about checking my children's Checklist Challenge and writings? I feel like I don't know what some of those grammatical techniques are myself!**

Some of it will depend on skill level of the student and the CQLA level. For example, a typical Level B student wouldn't use compound sentences with semicolons and conjunctive adverbs in them; however, some may choose to do so (like that one!). A student at that level would probably not use split quotes, etc. For most general checking, the Grammar Cards should be adequate to help you through. (If a Level B student is asked to do one of those advanced techniques, it will be in his weekly lesson, so you and he will both learn how to do it that week!) You will be amazed at the child who can not remember what an adverb is after six years of grammar books---but after six months of completing the CC , he will not only remember them but he will write with them.

For more in depth checking, you may use a more thorough manual, such as Abeka's or Rod and Staff's handbooks. I always used Rod and Staff at the recommendation of *Understanding Writing* and felt that it was very helpful. Now, I have a six hundred page *Gregg's Reference Manual*, but it is too long and confusing for everyday use.

Definitely work on content, and from there, branch out to fragments vs. sentences, paragraph formation, CC with a comma to combine two sentences, clause openers, etc. You will learn all of this right along with your student, so it will become easier and easier to check his work.

### **My junior high student does not even know what infinitives or clauses are. Should he begin CQLA in Level A instead of Level B?**

I would base a student's beginning CQLA level on taking dictation and writing most of all. He will eventually learn those grammar terms—especially the ones that are in the Checklist Challenge every week. (Each level has certain Checklist Challenge items that are always in the CC because the student should know how to do those items already based on his presumed skill level. After doing it over and over, students truly start to learn them.)

For example, I wouldn't take a twelve year old who can write the reports for Level B and take dictation from Level B back to Level A just because he can't remember what an infinitive is. It's just like in math—the functions they use all of the time (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), they remember, but they have to brush up to be able to divide fractions since they don't do that all of the time.

Remember, the goal is good writers—don't get bogged down on remembering each term. He will get it eventually!

### **Do you have any tips for helping students who are overwhelmed by dictation?**

For children who are just beginning writing and grammar (seven, eight, and nine year olds), please take dictation very lightly. If your student is ready for Level Pre A in every other area except dictation, I would recommend the following ideas for that child or another who is overwhelmed by dictation in general, for the first couple of weeks:

1. I always write difficult names and words on the board for everyone in the class. (I have at least four students testing in each level.) I tell them, "Here are 'Finney,' 'timbre,' and 'mountainous' for you."
2. Then I give the youngest or least advanced class members a little sticky note with words I know that that child will get stuck on. After several weeks of working with your student in CQLA, you will know, for example, that he just had the *ought* family and should know it with just a reminder (see below), but hasn't had *tion* words, etc.
3. When he comes to a word I feel that he should know but he doesn't, I do one of the following:
  - a. "You know that one—you wrote it in your essay!"
  - b. "Do you remember how that one goes—it's the ought family like *bought*, *sought*, and *wrought*?"
  - c. Or I have him tell me how he thinks each syllable should be, etc.
4. At first my testing students were hesitant to ask for help during dictation, knowing any words they got help on would go on next week's spelling list. If it is something a student should know, it does go on the list next week. If it's too advanced for that student (and I don't expect him to know it), it doesn't go on it. Because of this, my students like to try their best on their own and take their chances it might be right and might not go on next week's list!
5. For a seven or eight year old, I only do one or two sentences for dictation for at least the first month—and often longer. (As a side note: I never used a formal language arts program for my students in second grade or younger (and often third graders, too) prior to writing CQLA Pre A. Pre A is a gentle introduction to language arts, so now that we offer it, I feel like I can agree with putting younger students in it.)

6. In the beginning of doing CQLA, go slowly and tell him everything. Tell him, "Okay, put a comma now because there's a pause there, then go on," etc.
7. Once he's used to taking dictation some, you can wean him from so much help. Tell him, "Now I'm just going to say 'pause' when you should put a comma in and 'stop' when you should put a period in." This will help him see where the sentences end---and the purposes for commas. I tell my students when a colon or semicolon is needed.
8. As for quotations, that, like much of the dictation, is based on the abilities of the student. Level C students should be able to do simple quotations with speech tags before or after the quotes. Granted, you will have to walk them through split quotes, etc. for a long time, but I don't want to tell them everything in Level C.
9. I often give hints to the student during dictation. I use the dictation time as another teaching tool. Yes, I know the dictation is supposed to be a "quiz"---and it truly should become a benchmark of their learning for that week in many ways; however, I still use hints and tips to teach them during that time, too. For example, I might say when we're starting a quote, "Where do periods always go?" They respond, usually in unison, "Inside the quotation mark." etc.
10. I generally tell the student when a new paragraph is beginning, but even then, use that as a teaching time. Ask him, "Why do you think a new paragraph is beginning?" He should tell you that the thought has changed or a new speaker is speaking, etc.
11. When you're beginning CQLA, you might want to have your student just do the first paragraph of dictation until he is accustomed to it---and the rest of CQLA is not taking you and he so long! Have everyone do one paragraph only, then add a sentence or two each week for Extension and Further Extension students until they are doing all of it---or at least two or three of paragraphs for Further Extension students.

### **What steps should I follow in giving dictation?**

1. Before beginning dictation, write any words you know he is unable to spell (and any that you do not think he should know how to spell (such as, proper nouns, etc.) on the white board. (If I have a multi-level class, I will put the words for everyone on the white board and any for the Basic Level student only on a sticky note for his use only.)
2. Begin by reading the whole passage to remind him of it as he's labeling his paper, sharpening his pencil, etc.
3. Read the first sentence slowly, back up and read phrases (two to eight words, depending on level of child) slowly. When you get to a word on the board or sticky note, I tell him to look for it.
4. Reread each phrase until he's done, then read the next phrase.

### **CQLA teaches that prepositional phrases that are less than five words and do not demand a definite pause do not require a comma following them. When does a short prepositional phrase require a comma following it?**

Here are some examples when a comma may not be needed:

1. In time he arrived at this conclusion.
2. From that he decided to go further.

Now, some would hear a comma (or a pause) in those sentences and put it in. That is fine too. It is subjective, and yet, sometimes it just feels right and sounds right to have the comma there. For pp's less than five words, some other rules of thumb to consider include the following:

Is it needed to make the sentence clearer? In a sentence with a name in the pp, I would add a comma and the first time a reader reads a sentence with a pp opener containing a name, he might read the name incorrectly. For instance, "To Wong, Kim was a beautiful girl." The whole of idea of pp openers and commas is subjective, and I am a big comma user mainly because of the two purposes of comma usage:

- a. To make things clear (separate an appositive, an opener, etc.).
- b. To aid in oral reading.

Punctuation for oral reading clarity is very important to me. I mentally put punctuation into sentences all of the time when I'm reading aloud. I hate to start a sentence aloud and find a punctuation mark is missing and I read the sentence aloud all wrong! People who are read-aloud fans often use punctuation more liberally because they realize the value of punctuation in the read aloud process.

### **My student still does not know the most basic parts of speech after a few months of using CQLA. He continually asks me questions like, "Is dog a verb?" How can I help him?**

One of the beauties of the Checklist Challenge is that students are consistently reminded of the things they are learning in grammar---and they have to use them in their writing, too, not just learn some isolated grammar topics.

Again, keep asking the questions: "Do you remember the BHL verbs? We sang the song and circled them last week? Remember, adjectives describe things---can you use describers to describe this eraser?" etc. Jesus taught by asking questions--so we know it's a superior method of teaching.

Again, it will be just like learning mathematical operations. The grammatical items he uses over and over again (via the Checklist Challenge)---much like the four operations in math---will be the ones he will learn first. As the Checklist Challenge increases in difficulty, he will learn more and more grammar items. (Just as in math, he learns how to add fractions later than adding whole numbers.)

It will take time and patience. Also, be encouraged that it is the application of grammar that standardized tests evaluate---and that we should strive for in teaching. It is this application---knowing that he should use *gently* and not *gentle* to describe how something was done---that really matters in writing and life.

### **How should I grade my older students in CQLA? I feel like I need some types of objective measurements for their high school transcripts.**

Each homeschool family has different methods for record keeping and grading of their students. I will offer some tips that are specific to CQLA below:

1. Keep in mind that you should not "grade" a student during the learning process. Grading is for final products. CQLA uses a Teach-Practice-Apply method throughout each weekly lesson. You would not grade your student during the first two steps of this process. This is loosely divided as follows:

Spelling:

Teach---highlighting in the passage, reading the lesson and discussing it

Practice---Copying the words, recording them in their SN, writing sentence and using them (occasionally students will be asked to classify during this step too), and Optional Spelling Practice sidebars

Apply---the spelling test

## Grammar:

Teach---highlighting in the passage, reading the lesson, practicing recitation

Practice---grammar sentences and recitation

Apply---Using the grammar in their writings (Obviously, at later stages, you may desire to "grade" a student in the grammar sentences and recitation as part of the apply also; I would reserve this for upper Level B students and Level C students though)

Composition---The ultimate "apply" here is their final copy, but earlier benchmarks include finding errors in their essays and adding openers and closers, paragraph transitions, etc.

2. Point one does not mean that you do not "grade" them in terms of completion (an incomplete assignment) assuming the student had time to complete it requires "grading" in the form of punishment or consequences; likewise, insufficient recitation would require more recitation (Students must complete recitation assignments in order to memorize parts of speech in order to apply it in their writing. Obviously, there are different kinds of "grading"---character and academic final product grading!)
3. Specifically, it can be very challenging to "grade" compositions (which is one of the big reasons students in school rarely write).
  - a. Outline---I like to check my student's KWO's to be sure he is not using more than the indicated number of words, be sure he is understanding the main idea of each sentence, and see if he is using the most valuable words to help him in his writing. Each student will obviously choose different words for his key words, but if he is writing articles and pronouns instead of verbs, there is probably a comprehension problem.
  - b. Rough draft---The problem with waiting until the very final product to "grade" writings is that by the time it gets to the final copy, Mom has already helped edit it and find the errors, thus, you are not really grading his grammar or spelling in that way. I guess for people who are grading on a weekly, essay-by-essay basis, I would have to say that the rough draft and Checklist Challenge items are where the "grammar" grade for the essay should probably come from. In other words, your student should edit his own essay as much as possible, find his errors, and correct them.
  - c. Final copy---While you might make content suggestions for him from the rough draft to the final copy, the thoughts, CC items (opening sentences, closing sentences, title, etc.) all come together in the final copy. Here, I would say, is where the content grade would come in. I would use the following criteria to grade content of final copies:
    - a. Application of CC items dealing with those areas (title, opening sentence, transitions, etc. all deal with content of the essay). How good is his content on the CC content-type of revisions?
    - b. Following-the-assignment instructions (enough sources, in the right person, each paragraph containing the same topic, etc.)
    - c. Clarity
    - d. Vocabulary use
    - e. Interest to readers

**I read in the TG that students should read the passage every day. How do we know which parts of the passage to read, to copy, and to write from?**

The varying levels of the passages (Basic, Extension, and Further Extension) are used in the following way:

- For reading, vocabulary, and discussion purposes, everyone uses all of the passage.
- For finding things in the passage, such as spelling words, grammar items, answers to questions, etc., everyone uses all the passage (unless it states otherwise, like "Look in the first copy box...").

- For KWO and other essay components, it will tell specifically how much to use. For example, it will say on the KWO lines "First Paragraph---Extensions Only" if there is anything different than everyone doing it. Or it might say on the last paragraph line notes "Fourth Paragraph Further Extension Only." It will always clearly tell you in the outlining (KWO) section if your student should NOT do a certain paragraph or if the report excludes a paragraph for any level or for all levels.
- For copying and dictation, each student uses the copy box(es) indicated for his level---the same boxes he copied at the beginning of the week.

### What additional materials are needed to implement CQLA?

Of course, a CQLA student uses a dictionary and thesaurus widely. My students each have a three-holed punch dictionary from Wal-mart that fits into their binder with their CQLA unit, and we have other "bigger" dictionaries floating around, as well. I have two large, hardcover dictionaries--one is a "children's dictionary" and one is just a Webster's. I like to have these bigger dictionaries for more definitions to be listed. (The wholesale club in our area often carries a nice, large children's dictionary.)

You may obtain some of the books listed in the bibliography in the *Teacher's Guide*. You might enjoy reading the entire book in some cases. This is a listing of books from which the passage material was obtained and rewritten. This includes many Institute in Basic Life Principles publications, like *Character Sketches*, *Power for True Success*, etc. It also includes some other character books (the Coriells' books) and biographies. These are totally optional as they are not assigned as regular assignments, but as optional ones only.

I will sum up the needs below:

Definitely needed:

1. CQLA unit (one per child per month; one volume per year)
2. *Spelling Notebook* (one per each child for the rest of his CQLA years)
3. Dictionary
4. Thesaurus
5. *Teacher's Guide* (to help you become a better language arts and writing teacher)

Nice to have:

1. Highlighters
2. White board and markers and small white boards for your students
3. Sticky notes to mark assignments
4. Big dictionary

Totally optional:

1. Any books you want to read that are listed in the passage
2. Rhyming dictionary
3. Reference books for essays and reports: *Who's Who in the Christian Church*, *Character Sketches*, biographies, encyclopedias, *Strong's Concordance*, Bible dictionary, Bible encyclopedia, hymn histories, character stories, *Children's Bible Handbook*, *Cloud of Witnesses*, TFT educational coloring books for younger students, etc.
4. CQLA teaching video in which I teach one week of CQLA to two students at the same time in Level B
5. The Almost 3 R's tape set for additional language arts teaching help

**My daughter (using Level A) memorizes the passage, and then when she rewrites it for her essay, it sounds identical to the passage. How can I help her overcome this?**

I don't think she will overcome it with time as memorizing the passage is something that could easily become a habit for her. Here are some suggestions to combat those problems:

1. Have her use less words than the KWO recommends. For example, if it allots 4-6 words per sentence for outlining, have her only use 3 or 4 words, if possible. Do not do this if it causes tears or frustration, of course.
2. Model for her a couple of KWO's in which you use synonyms and different words and phrases than the passage does and have her write her report or essay from your KWO's.
3. Do not have her do the "reread the passage" step just before she writes. In other words, don't keep it as fresh for her as you would another student who doesn't memorize as well.
4. As she writes her KWO, help her change the words by asking her for synonyms for the words she gives you. For example, if she suggests the words "Jesus," "taught," and "disciples." Walk with her one word at a time. "Okay, what can you substitute for for "Jesus" so you use different words than the passage. If she can't think of any, give her suggestions. Do this for every other word or so. "What can you substitute for "taught"? If she still can't come up with any, give her sentences: "I taught the children." "I \_\_\_\_\_ the children," etc. (Hopefully, she will say "instruct," "demonstrate," or "equipped"---or something like those.) If she still isn't able to come up with any, you may have to get out the thesaurus and let her see how many words she could use besides the ones in the passage.
5. Lastly, when she does the Checklist Challenge, have her find and change an extra word or two in each paragraph. Or better yet, you circle two words in each paragraph that are also in the original passage, and have her change them with a thesaurus, if needed. (If this is too much work on top of the Checklist Challenge, you might want to omit some of the items from the Checklist Challenge and focus on helping her learn to use more of her own vocabulary.)

Lastly, keep in mind that she is young! I wouldn't recommend working too hard to increase her writing skills at this age if it weren't for the fact that she might develop bad habits of memorizing and not using her own thoughts in her writing. Take it as slow as she needs to go!

**My students seem to need additional spelling practice besides what is provided in CQLA. What do you recommend?**

I will enumerate some tips for further spelling practice below:

1. In the newer versions, you can have your student use the optional spelling sidebars to unscramble the words, word search them, correct the spellings, etc. This is a big help to visual spelling learners.
2. One family uses the following schedule for their spelling practice.\*
  - A. On Monday they write them next to the words in the curriculum.
  - B. On Tuesday they write them in their *Spelling Notebooks*.
  - C. On Wednesday they write sentences with them.
  - D. On Thursday they write them on lined paper again.
  - E. On Friday they have the test.

3. You may use the Spelling Words Practice Sheet in chapter six of this *Teacher's Guide*.

4. Follow any of the Spelling Practice Tips provided in the spelling section of this manual.

\*Note: This was before we added Optional Spelling Practice Sidebars.

**I want to group my advanced seven year old with her older brother in CQLA Level A. Do you have any suggestions for having my seven year old work in Level A?**

I have never had a seven year old in language arts until a couple of years ago when my fifth child did Pre A (soon after we added that level to the curriculum). My seven year olds were either learning to read or learning to do the laundry--and not ready to learn to write. Writing is a difficult task that needs eased into for young learners.

- (1) Just work about fifteen to thirty minutes a day on CQLA together.
- (2) Any part of CQLA that is easy for her, let her do on her own. (This usually includes copying passages, copying spelling words, and sometimes copying final copies of their reports---depending on the length and how messy the rough draft is after inserting changes--and her small motor development.)
- (3) Just have her copy one or two sentences of the passage each week at first.
- (4) Have her narrate her report to you---but only do part of it.
- (5) Have her do the Checklist Challenge with you, but only do the easy parts. (Write the BHL verbs on the white board. Read her report aloud and have her stop you when she hears a BHL verb or action verb---something someone does. Highlight those for her. Have her pick one of the verbs that you highlighted and give her ideas for a stronger one. Tell her she can put any of these *ly* words anyplace she thinks sounds good. Just do the describers, verbs, and titles at first.)
- (6) Take dictation on the sentence or two she copied at the beginning of the week. Write any words she know she can't spell on the white board for her and when you get to it, tell her it's on the board. For other words that she should know, but doesn't, give her a clue: "'How' is spelled just like 'cow.'" etc.
- (7) Take it easy---small portions. Do only what she understands. Go slowly. Do whatever it takes to make her love it (usually changing the essay and having a great final product)--and don't do so much that she hates school, learning--or CQLA!!!

**What are white boards used for in CQLA?**

We use the white boards for any of the following:

- Writing verbs on the board as they do the Checklist Challenge (BHL lists especially)
- Writing hard to spell words and names during dictation
- Sample sentences when they need extra help during grammar (showing where punctuation goes with quotation marks, etc.)
- Assignment lists on occasion

### **What are "sticky notes" or "post-its" used for in CQLA?**

We use the sticky notes to mark each assignment, and then they put checks on each one as they complete it. This makes checking their assignments quick when we get back together. We also use sticky notes for them to write their "extra" words they missed from dictation, spelling tests, essays, etc. to give to me for their test. We love sticky notes!

### **Why does CQLA have an additional level that WBLA does not have--Pre A?**

Pre A is my pride and joy. I think it's because when we first began writing the sister program for the Advanced Training Institute, we had four levels in that program just like we do in CQLA. Their unit study curriculum is all based on three levels, so they asked us to make the curriculum three levels. When we did that, we virtually eliminated new readers from using the curriculum. Level A is simply too difficult for a new reader. Now that we are publishing it ourselves for non-ATI families, we added back in the earlier level--Pre A--and it is more consistent with our beliefs about teaching young children. Thus, I feel good about offering it. With WBLA Level A, I was constantly warning moms about not putting children in it too early, about writing for the child for a while, about only having the child do a lot of the work orally, etc. Now with Pre A, I don't have to do that--and I have a quality program that is not inconsistent with what I believe about second and third grade children--especially boys in those grades!

### **Are the books consumable? Can two students share a book?**

They are consumable workbooks. Pre A students do everything in their workbooks. Level A students do most of their work (except write their essays) in their workbooks. Levels B and C have many grammar assignments, so they sometimes have space for their note taking for essays in their workbooks, and sometimes do not. A student will basically write on every page of the workbook, so it is nearly impossible to share. The nature of the program (using the weekly passage for all language arts learning) makes it even more difficult to share books. Students are asked to find words that follow this week's spelling rule, find adjectives, find sentence openers, etc. in their passage, and highlight them. (This is part of the TEACH step of the program.) Then they do the grammar assignments in the workbooks. And their Checklist Challenges (in which they check off each essay revision as they do it) is in the workbook each week too. CQLA worktexts are copyrighted as the profit from the sales of CQLA help us travel to speak and encourage homeschoolers *and* pay our editors and typesetters, as well as order fillers, materials manager, etc.

### **I read that each Series does not have a separate Teacher's Guide, but that the Answer Keys and Lesson Plans for each Series are following each monthly lesson. Yet at the website, I see there is a TG and accompanying cassette/cd. Do I need this to use CQLA? What does it contain?**

Character Quality Language Arts (CQLA) was first developed as a curriculum for families with several children in school at one time. In other words, it was created to be as family-friendly as possible! Thus, there are Teacher's Tips scattered throughout the curriculum to give more insights to the CQLA teacher. (These may be read and used by Level B and C students on their own as well.) There are Teacher's Helps and Answer Keys at the back of each monthly unit for the CQLA teacher to pull out and use as needed (or for Level B and C students to use as their daily schedule and answers). These Teacher's Helps are two pages of five day and four day lesson plans that tell you (or your upper level students) what to do each day. The Answer Keys vary in length according to the number and length of the grammar and structural analysis lessons in each monthly unit.

Thus, there are not separate “teacher’s guides” for each book. Instead, separate “teacher’s guides” for each book are replaced by Teacher Tips throughout, Teacher’s Helps at the back of each monthly unit, and lesson plans and Answer Keys at the back of each monthly unit. The CQLA Teacher’s Guide is an inexpensive guide to using Character Quality Language Arts.

The CQLA Teacher’s Guide contains an overview of the entire program, a “how to” section to instruct parents in how to use the program, a book report guide, complete set of grammar cards (all the grammar rules learned in CQLA on “cards” in alphabetical order), the master Checklist Challenge (showing all editing and revising items taught in CQLA from all levels), a Scope and Sequence chart showing what is taught in which unit, a Content Area and Character Quality Overview Chart (also available at this web site) indicating what Bible and character principles each unit covers, a Frequently Asked Questions section (huge!), instructions on How to Do a Key Word Outline, a large homophone and confusing words chart, a sample from a Level B unit, and a cassette explaining the program (that correlates with the Level B sample), and much more. Even if you never use CQLA, the TG alone is a writing and language arts teacher’s gold mine!

At only \$25.00, it is a great way to learn more about CQLA with a minimum investment for those considering making a switch from several other curriculum materials to the all-in-one *Character Quality Language Arts*. (Note: Many sections of the *Teacher’s Guide* are also available at our website.)

### **What vocabulary does CQLA contain?**

The vocabulary work right now includes the following most of the time:

1. Using words from the given Vocabulary Box (that have something to do with the monthly character quality) in sentences about the passage, character, etc.
2. Using the given Vocabulary Box words to describe someone showing or not showing the character quality.
3. Highlighting vocabulary words (words that the student might not know the definitions of or might not normally use in writing) in the passage, then looking up their definitions, synonyms, antonyms, etc.
4. Using these highlighted words in sentences; using synonyms to rewrite the passage in your own words.
5. Using the vocabulary words from that month’s given Vocabulary Box in each report, where applicable. (Student is told to do this in his Checklist Challenge.)
6. Also, in the Checklist Challenge, in order to help bridge the gap between the student’s speaking vocabulary and writing vocabulary, oftentimes the student is to use a word he has never used in writing before in his weekly report.

As much as possible, the vocabulary work in CQLA has the student using the vocabulary words. Anyone can look up definitions and write them, but it is in the using of the words that the words become his own. Application is the final step in learning!

**I have one older child who has done grammar forever, doesn’t need spelling help, and probably has outgrown copy and dictation work. However, he is not confident in writing since we have only done writing hit and miss throughout his school years. Someone suggested *Meaningful Composition*. What is it and would it help my son?**

### **Meaningful Composition Overview**

- Eighteen week programs with one and two week reports from outlining through writing through revising with a detailed, usage-based checklist (Checklist Challenge--CC) through final product
- All writing is directed--student is taught step by step what to write, how many paragraphs, what should go into each paragraph, etc.

- One semester in length (18 weeks) if used alone 30-70 minutes per day, depending on level
- Two semesters in length (36 weeks) if used along with a grammar-only program like *Easy Grammar* or *Jensen's Grammar* (not with another language arts program that already includes writing as that would be too much)
- Report and essay content, both in given material for KWO writing and for original assignments, is character, principle, historical, and scientific based (i.e. diligence, honoring authorities, godly missionaries, historic battles and treaties, butterflies, salt, etc.--all related back to character and godly principles)

#### **Meaningful Comp 4**

- Starts with sentences (parts of a sentence)
- Only book that outlines the basic parts of speech (as related to what a sentence contains)
- Moves from sentence writing to combining types of sentences (topic sentences, closing sentences, support sentences) into paragraphs quickly
- Practices dozens of paragraph writing/outlining models--question/answer, personal mapping, other mapping, list making, 5 W's, fill in the support sentences when topic and closing sentences are given, and more
- Multiple paragraph writing introduced, including transitioning, paragraph as unit of thought/aspect of a topic, paragraph breakdown, etc.
- Introduction and detailed teaching of how to do the Key Word Outline (KWO) over given material
- Multiple paragraph report introduction over given material via KWO
- Introduction and detailed teaching of how to complete the basics of the Checklist Challenge (CC) (i.e. not quotation writing, advanced sentence combining, etc.)
- Broken down day by day
- Excellent remediation for students who have had a lot of grammar but have never mastered solid, detailed paragraph and multi-paragraph writing; very gentle writing introduction (even high schoolers have used this over a month or two period of time as remediation)

#### **Meaningful Comp 6**

- Starts with introduction and detailed teaching of how to do the Key Word Outline (KWO) over given material
- Many KWO reports and essays with given material over character-based, historical, and scientific topics (i.e. endurance, George Washington Carver, trees, etc.)
- Starts early on with introduction and detailed teaching of how to do the Checklist Challenge, including more difficult revision items not given in MC A
- Original, directed reports from outlining, to writing, to CC, to final product, including informative, persuasive, narrative, etc.
- Broken down into one and two week lessons
- Excellent remediation for students who have had a lot of grammar but have never mastered multi-paragraph writing and for those who have not learned how to do the KWO and CC since detailed instructions are included in this book

#### **Meaningful Comp 8**

- A couple of KWO reports/essays
- Main focus is on two week original reports and essays from outlining to writing to CC, to final product, including informative, persuasive, narrative, instructional, story writing, and more
- Lengthy CC's given for each report/essay to promote application of grammar and usage skills
- Broken down into one and two week lessons
- Introduces and practices five paragraph and timed essay for SAT preparations

**When I look at the samples of CQLA, I feel like the spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and even passage content are all too easy for my son in Level A, but I don't think he can handle the writing at Level B since he has not done that much writing. Which level should I get?**

We often hear parents who desire to use CQLA say that their students have had grammar and spelling year after year and are quite adept at both of them; however, these students have not written very much because they have not had a directed program, the program they were using was too vague on writing instructions, etc. Thus, many families who want to use CQLA and have an all-in-one language arts program find that their children have gaps between their grammar level and their writing level (or spelling and writing or a combination).

What do you do when your children are at various levels in the different areas of language arts? Here are some suggestions for bridging those gaps:

1. Remember that there are multiple levels within each level of CQLA. Thus, when you purchase the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade level (Level B), you have the option in each area of language arts (spelling, copying, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, composition, creative writing, editing, poetry, etc.) to work either in the Basic, Extension, or Further Extension level. For example:
  - a. If your 6th grader is ready for spelling and grammar at higher levels than he is in writing/composition/editing, you may have him do the Further Extension level work for spelling and grammar, but only the Basic Level work for composition.
  - b. If your eighth grader is ready for more advanced grammar but just ready for Extension writing, you may do the Further Extension grammar, along with the optionals, then do the Extension writing.

Of course, he may move up into various levels, move back as needed, etc. all throughout the year, according to the type of assignment, his interest level (writing about an animal is often easier for boys than writing a journal entry, for example).

2. If there is truly a significant gap between spelling/grammar and writing for your student, you might consider one of the following options:
  - a. Get the *Meaningful Composition* program (our composition only book) at the level below where you would put him in CQLA, and do this for a semester (or even for just a month, if needed). For example, suppose your student is ready for Book 6 of CQLA in every area except for composition, you may get him MC Book 4 and have him do that for a month or two, learning how to write sentences, then paragraphs, then multiple paragraphs, Key Word Outlines, Checklist Challenges, and more. In just a month or two, your junior high student will have had remedial instruction in the areas of writing that are most crucial in the beginning stages.
  - b. Get the *Meaningful Composition* program that is one level beneath your student and the CQLA level he is ready for overall (with the writing exception), and have him do all of the CQLA but the writing portions. Have him do the MC writing for remediation, and within a few months, his gap will be greatly lessened.

**I noticed that the samples of CQLA do not contain traditional diagramming of sentences. Why not? Don't students need to diagram sentences to learn English?**

CQLA teaches a form of "diagramming" whereby the students learn to code their sentences to find the parts of speech. First of all, they learn to recognize prepositions and prepositional phrases. They mark these by placing parenthesis around them. Then they find and code subordinate clauses, marking these by placing < > signs around them. Next, they find other "distractors"-- things that might keep them from determining what the main subject and main verb of each sentence is. Once they get the sentence down to the "bare bones," then they find the main subject,

main verb, describers/modifiers, and direct objects, etc.

CQLA's grammar is purposeful: it is the grammar that is needed to learn to write well. Toward that end, everything the students learn in grammar is applied to writing. For example, the purpose of learning direct objects is to be sure that following an action verb, an object (the direct object) that is a pronoun is in the nominative case (*him, her* instead of *he, she*). That is how grammar is approached in CQLA--your student will learn all the grammar that he needs to become a proficient writer. We do not feel that diagramming sentences (in the sense of knowing how to branch each part of speech off the main thoroughfare) is the best way to learn grammar for writing. It is frustrating for students and parents alike. Also, it is not taught as often in schools anymore because grading it is too teacher time intensive and laborious.

Feel free to print and try the monthly sample off from the website for Level B and Level C to get a good feeling for how grammar is approached in CQLA. All four levels are provided for one month for free at our web site for folks to "try before they buy."

**I have several friends who want to order CQLA. Someone mentioned that if I am going to order ten or more CQLA's (me and my friends together), I should consider becoming a CQLA representative. Is it really as simple as that?**

Become a CQLA Representative!

CQLA fans may now help spread the word about CQLA formally--and make money doing so! Training for Triumph announces its CQLA Representative Program, which will begin in full on January 1, 2007:

1. A CQLA representative must sign an agreement saying that she will represent CQLA in a positive light, professional manner, and with godly character.
2. A CQLA representative must order at least ten CQLA books per calendar year. This might only be three or four families besides her own, in many cases.
3. A CQLA representative may present CQLA at support group meetings, conventions, living room presentations, one-on-one, or any other opportunity that arises after first contacting TFT to be sure another representative (a TFT family member or other rep) is not already planning to present at that event.
4. A CQLA representative will pay all of her own expenses for traveling, speaking about CQLA, preparing handouts and samples, etc.
5. A CQLA representative will take orders and postal mail those orders (along with payment and shipping costs--see rep's prices below) to TFT. TFT will fill the orders from our warehouse (rather than the representative having to carry CQLA herself) and ship directly to the customers, as indicated in the orders sent to us by the representative.
6. A CQLA representative may buy CQLA books ahead of time for events or to have in stock to fill orders on the spot. In that case, she would pay shipping then charge shipping to her customers in order to recoup that expense.
7. A CQLA representative may return CQLA books after an event or at any time for a full refund of her purchase price as long as the books are still shrink-wrapped and unused. The representative will be responsible for the shipping - both directions.
8. A CQLA representative may develop her own website using information about CQLA or MC

from the TFT website, including samples to be downloaded and printed off.

9. A CQLA representative may use our videos or cassettes in teaching about CQLA as long as she purchases these for herself. (She may loan these out, host events using them, etc.)
10. For complete details about the CQLA Representative Program, including profit margin and agreement forms, contact TFT.