

# Training for Triumph E-Newsletter Issue 007 July

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new! Website:

[www.trainingfortrumphhomeschool.com](http://www.trainingfortrumphhomeschool.com)

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**1. Training for Triumph Events and Announcements**

**\*About Our E-Mail Address List**

We are very new in the areas of publishing our own materials and speaking to home schoolers outside of ATI. Thus, we have a small email list. If you have been sent something from us and would rather not, please either delete it, or email us asking to be removed from our list. If you receive duplicate emails, please be patient with us as we grow. ☺ Please consider helping us spread the news about Training for Triumph and our materials by forwarding our E-Catalog or one of our E-Newsletters onto a few people who might like our products or services---or tell them about our new website!

**\*Training for Triumph's Calendar of Events and Speaking Engagements**

**Thursday, August 11 at 7:00 pm** at The Chapel in southwest Fort Wayne--Kick off meeting for parents and students for fall cottage classes

**Thursday, August 18 at 7:00 pm;** Ray and Donna speaking in New Albany support group's kick off meeting on "The Top Twenty for Twenty---Twenty Pieces of Home School Advice From Twenty Years of Home Schooling"

**Wednesday, August 24;** Craigville language arts and composition classes begin (see link for class schedule)

**Thursday, August 25;** Fort Wayne cottage classes at the Chapel begin (see link for class schedule)

**Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00 (Ohio time);** Ray and Donna speak at PEACH support group's kick off meeting on "The Top Twenty for Twenty---Twenty Pieces of Home School Advice From Twenty Years of Home Schooling"

**\*Check out our new web site!!!**

Finally...after more than a year of operating without a thorough (and sometimes accessible) web site, Training for Triumph has a fully linked, expanded web site! Check it out. If you want to know when cottage classes begin, go to our web site. If you want to print off a sample of CQLA and try it for a month, go to our web site. If you want to see past E-newsletters or read articles we've written, go to our web site. This site has it all! Our computer un-savvy daughter Kayla taught herself how to do it and believe me, she really did it! Our address is [www.trainingfortriumphhomeschool.com](http://www.trainingfortriumphhomeschool.com). Please refer a friend to our site!

**\*TFT Fort Wayne Cottage Classes Kick-Off Meeting in August**

On Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, TFT will hold its yearly kick-off meeting for the fall Fort Wayne cottage classes. If you would like to know more about our classes, see the materials we will be using in the classes, sign up for classes, watch speech and debate demonstrations, and more, this is the meeting to come to. The fall semester at The Chapel is when we hold our not-for-profit speech and debate class, so if you're interested in having your twelve to eighteen year old take speech and debate class for cost-only this year, this is the semester to do it. The meeting will be held at The Chapel in southwest Fort Wayne at 7:00 p.m. Feel free to call us for more information (or visit our new web site!).

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**2. Spotlight on *The Power for True Success***

What makes those who follow Christ different is seen in our character and how we interact with those around us. This fully illustrated book explains what character qualities are, gives examples from Scripture and life, and gives advice on how to practice them. Above all, it explains how true success comes from pleasing God.

The book, *Power for True Success*, is a beautiful coffee table book that is actually useful for families (as opposed to a coffee table book that only Mom enjoys looking at)! It is great for middle school and high school students to read alone to study the character quality that is focused on in their language arts studies that month---through CQLA or WBLA. It is also good for family devotions or dinner time reading.

*Power for True Success* is a hard-cover book that introduces the character quality, has related Scriptures, stories, tid-bits, historical and scientific information that shows that character quality (or the lack of it), and more.

Price \$25 each

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### **3. Frequently Asked Questions About WBLA, CQLA, or Language Arts**

**Can you tell what the major 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

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

#### Level A

- \*First two weeks, the student writes one to four paragraphs.
- \*The last two weeks, he writes two to five original paragraphs.
- \*The passage sentences are six to twenty-four words in length.
- \*The passage sentences do contain compound sentences and openers as these are taught here.
- \*The paragraphs for copying 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.

#### Level B

- \*First two weeks, the student writes three to six paragraphs.
- \*The last two weeks, he writes three to ten original paragraphs (depending on type of essay--biographies are generally easier and longer in length).
- \*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 are four to twelve sentences in length.

#### Level C

- \*First two weeks, the student writes three to eight paragraphs.
- \*The last two weeks, he writes six to twelve paragraphs.

\*The passage sentences are up to forty words in length (rarely).

\* The passage sentences contain all major writing components, including double openers; compound sentences containing "three sentences" combined; split quotes; and single and double quotes.

\*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 (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level); Level A (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade level); Level B (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade level); and Level C (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade level). 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 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 all of those words, 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 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 advance sentence structures (dialogue, for instance); 3) Write openers and closers when the younger students do not; etc. Upper level students are required to use more sources, write more paragraphs, etc.
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.

#### **4. Tips for Homeschool Moms**

##### **\*1 or 2 Times Your Age**

Another household “blitz” type of activity that we do in our home is the one or two times your age strategy. I started this many, many years ago when we used to have cell groups in our home every week. Halfway through the cell group meetings (after the worship and children’s sharing time), the children would be dismissed to go into the adjoining room to play. When the adults were finished with our meeting, the family room that the children went into to play was always a complete disaster. The children were all overwhelmed when we told them to “clean up the room,” so I began the “one times your age”----or however many it took to get the room cleaned.

Ray or I would go into the room and oversee the cleaning, and we would tell the children, “Okay, everyone is going to go around the room and pick up and put away one times your age. So, if you’re six, you have to pick up and put away six things. It doesn’t matter if you got them out or someone else did; just put away six things.” Any adults helping would also put away one times our age---or help some of the littler ones get their quota. Then when everyone stopped and announced they were done with their age, we would do it again. Usually (especially if other adults were in picking up their ages!), two, three, or four times of one times your age, and all of the stuffed animals, dolls, games, army men, etc. were up in their boxes, tubs, and shelves, and the kids could have snack time. Plus, nobody was too overwhelmed!

We have adapted this to our family's use often. Sometimes we'll say, "This house needs a major pick up. Everyone go through the house and pick up three times your age." Other times, if I'm going to be gone for the afternoon, and the children will have extra time because they won't be doing as much school with me, I'll leave on their schedule that they can be free when all of their independent work is done---and they've done one times their age in each room of the house. (It makes them glad we have a small house now!)

We have also made times in which the children could have free time in the late afternoons and early evenings when they did all of their independent list, their jurisdictions (the room that each child is responsible for cleaning), and one times their age in each room, outside, in the garage, in the learning center, and in the shed. They ask me why they need to do one times their age if each person just did his or her jurisdiction (and why are we cleaning out the shed in the middle of the week!). I encourage them to find things on bookcases that are out of place or pick up small pieces of trash from around the trash can under the desks, etc. This shows them how to be even more thorough—and go that extra mile. It also shows each person other things they could have done in their jurisdictions to make them even neater.

"Times your age" is especially helpful in group situations (like our cell group) and in families with a lot of young children. Even a three year old can pick up three things, then pick up three more---and have the satisfaction of "doing his age."

**\*What can I do that nobody else can do right now?**

We sort of got this household management tactic from Gregg Harris (Can you tell we love his seminars??), I think. I do remember that he is the one who said that the youngest one who

can do the job should do the job. We took that one step further when Ray challenged me to give the children more of the daily work and keep focused on the things that nobody in the household could do but me. I would be unloading the dishwasher, and he would ask me, “What can you do that only you can do right now?” Then we would redirect a little one (who has many carefree hours a day anyway!) to unload the dishwasher, and I would go total the kids’ school hours for our record keeping (back when we sent in records to our home school curriculum provider every month).

I would be folding a load of laundry, and Ray would say, “That’s the hardest job that needs done right now?” And I would call the youngest child who could handle the job in to finish the laundry, while I would go marinate some meat for freezer entrees (before I taught someone younger to marinate!!). It went on and on like this until we got into the habit of Mom truly working on the most difficult, intensive, only-she-could do jobs—and younger people working at their levels.

Of course, Ray and I still work with the children on projects too---after all, working together builds family unity! We often all clean up the evening meal together (or at least one of us parents does while the other works on filling orders with another child or Dad has a discipleship meeting with one of them). We often all prepare freezer meals and company meals together. We always do big projects all together, such as cleaning out the garage, the attic, or the shed or trading out of season clothes for the next season’s wardrobes. But when it comes down to the daily ins and outs, I often ask myself “What can I do right now that nobody but Mom can do....then I do it!

##### **5. Book Review Just for You: *The Mayflower Adventure***

Several years ago I found a set of great books that I began reading to my older children. We only made it through about a dozen of them (as opposed to when they were younger and we made it through all fifty or sixty something *Boxcar Children* and *Sugar Creek Gang*) before they all grew up on me---had too much independent work, too many classes, too many lessons, frequent debates, etc.---and reading long series' of books was no longer a possibility for us. I have re-started the series with my little boys, and I remember why I loved them so—and only wish I had found them twenty years ago, so I could have read *all* of them to my older kids!

The series is entitled THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE. Yes, they are fiction. No, they are probably not completely, Mayflower-Compact-accurate, but yes, they are fun, endearing, godly, exciting, interesting, and wonderful! The series has dozens and dozens of books in it; I'm not exactly sure how many—but at least thirty plus. It begins with a family leaving Holland for America on the *Speedwell* (along with the *Mayflower*). As far as I can remember from when I read the first dozen or so several years ago, each book goes chronologically in history, following this one family---and their descendents--- all the way through American history.

*The Mayflower Adventure* begins with a godly, Christian family and follows their trip to America. Then the rest take off from there. These books do not just contain “good people” doing “good things.” They are truly Christ-filled with the children leading others to the Lord, talking of their dependence on the Lord, and more. I'm sure they try to be historically accurate, and my older “historians” think they do a pretty good job of weaving fiction with history to create some great stories.

You can purchase these at most bookstores, through Library and Educational Services, etc. We are reading them aloud in order along with our American history studies. They are approximately 120-150 pages each in length, and I would say they are probably written at a fifth or sixth grade level, though junior high students of all grades would probably enjoy reading them. They have various authors and are published by Barbour Publishing. Below, I am listing some of the titles and topics for you, so you get an idea of what they contain. Happy reading!

#4 *Fire by Night* –in Boston

#7 *Small Pox Strikes* –1721 in Boston; smallpox epidemic

#13 *Adventure in the Wilderness*—early 1800's

#18 *Riot in the Night*—1836 in Cincinnati; press

#23 *The Rebel Spy*—Civil War begins

#26 *The Great Mill Explosion*—May 2, 1878

#29 *Chicago's World Fair*—1893

**6. To Make You Laugh; To Make You Cry; To Make You Smile; To Make You Ponder...**Prose, Poetry, and Anecdotes

### **“1, 2, 3 Obey!”**

When Cami was just under five, we lived back a long, long lane out in the country. At the beginning of the lane lived a family with a little boy who was also five. Occasionally, this little boy would come down to play with Cami---but he never wanted to go home when it was time.

One evening at dinner, after this neighbor boy had been down playing in the yard with Cami, she started to describe to us his mom’s disciplinary technique. Now, I will forever keep this moment in my “mind’s picture gallery’ because Cami was a giggler when she was little---so I captured many giggles and put them altogether into one darling, forever ‘giggle picture’ of her in my mind.

Anyway, Cami could barely get the first sentence of her news out because she was giggling so much, her eyes big and her sweet little hand covering her giggles as she exclaimed, “You’ll never believe what Billy’s mom does when he disobeys!”

“What?” we questioned.

“She...she.....(giggle, giggle)....she COUNTS!”

Then she went on in great detail to describe the scene to us: “She told him it was time to get his bike and head home, and he said he didn’t want to (like he always does)---*she’s saying this all really fast yet matter-of-factly while she giggles*---and she said he had to, and he said no again, and she said not to make her tell his dad, and he said no again, and then she looked real serious and she started COUNTING!!“ Giggle, giggle---what a dolly.....

When she recovered from her giggling, she asked, “How does counting make someone obey?”

We explained this child training technique to all the children---how when a parent begins counting, it means it’s the last straw and the child has to do it by a certain number or else---and they all began to giggle and count at each other to see if it would make each one do what the counter told him or her to do. (Out of the mouth of babes, huh?)

Of course, this led to a lesson on first time obedience and how Mommy and Daddy should never have to say it over and over to get them to obey—and we should NEVER have to count.

### **“Big Brothers, Sisters-in-Law, and Baseball Gloves” or ‘I Wish Joshie Still Lived Here’”**

A couple of weeks ago, my three little guys were in one of those whiny, “I miss Joshie” moods. They started in about how they never get to play with Joshua anymore. How they never get to see him anymore (which isn’t true at all) and how they wish he had never gotten married.

“I thought you loved Lisa,” I asked them. “She plays with you, takes you places, lets you stay over, teaches you art....”

“We love Lisa. We just wish J wasn’t married, so he could play all the time. Now he has to work so much, and when he’s not working, he wants to be with Lisa.”

“Well, you need to take back what you said about wishing J wasn’t married...and about him never paying any attention to you. He always pays attention to all of us---even though he’s married,” I said.

They hesitantly agreed and later told me they didn’t really mean it—and they were happy to have a sister-in-law and they loved Lisa, but they still miss playing all the time with Joshua.

A few hours later, Joshua and Lisa pulled into the driveway. The boys ran out to greet them, just like they always do...surrounding their car with “weapons” and three boys in costumes of some era, book, or movie theme. I watched out the window as J and Lisa piled out of the car, J with his work clothes still on as Lisa had picked him up from the paint site---and both of them holding their hands in the air in surrender to their new captors---each one with a baseball glove on one hand.....they had come, out of the blue, to play with the boys (and Dad and the girls!).

Two hours later, they piled back in their car after a series of baseball, kickball, and trampoline jumping with all the kids and Dad. (Unfortunately, I had to leave for a while.) Now that makes ME smile.

### **“The Bachelor Merit”**

Our nine-year-old Josiah went to a new program called Royal Rangers, a Christian scouting program similar to Boy Scouts.

When he came home the first night, he exclaimed, "I'm already halfway done with one of the merits. That's the one I'm starting on for sure. Mom, it's called Bachelor! Why do they have a merit called "Bachelor"? It's so easy I can't even believe it's a merit. Can you imagine a nine-year-old who hasn't done three full loads of laundry and made three complete meals? Jakie can almost get that merit, and he's only in kindergarten!!!"

## 7. In the Kitchen---Strawberry Recipes

In June (and into July some), we always enjoy strawberry recipes! I've included a few below for you to try.

### Strawberry Cake

I got this recipe from a German Baptist friend back home—who was known for her great cooking and baking. She made it as a layer cake—and it was beautiful. Our icing comes out too wet for a beautiful layer cake, but it is still delicious.

#### Cake

1 box white cake mix  
3 eggs  
1 cup crushed strawberries  
½ cup oil  
1 small pkg strawberry jello

1. Preheat oven.
2. Mix all but strawberries.
3. Fold in crushed strawberries.
4. Bake at 350 for 20-25 minutes convection (25-35 minutes regular oven).

#### Icing

1 stick soften butter  
½ cup crushed strawberries  
3 cups+ powdered sugar

1. Mix butter and powdered sugar until thick.
2. Fold in crushed strawberries and their juices.
3. Add more powdered sugar to thicken as needed.

### Strawberry Bundt Cake

This is a pretty bundt cake that doesn't need any frosting to be yummy.

1 (8 oz) pkg cream cheese, softened

1/3 cup sugar  
1 egg  
1 tsp lemon extract  
1 (18.25 oz) white cake mix  
1 lb. fresh strawberries  
3 eggs  
½ cup (4 oz) sour cream  
2 TBSP vegetable oil  
¼ cup powdered sugar, optional (for garnish)

1. Preheat oven to 350'.
2. In small bowl, cream cheese with sugar, until well blended.
3. Beat in first egg and lemon extract. Set aside.
4. Stem strawberries, cut them in half. Mash them with "potato masher" until juicy.
5. Strain smashed strawberries and save the juice.
6. In large bowl, combine cake mix, strawberry juice, eggs, sour cream, and oil.
7. Beat on low speed to blend.
8. Beat on medium speed for two minutes.
9. Pour batter into greased and floured 12-cup capacity Bundt cake pan.
10. Pour cream cheese mixture over center of batter, avoiding sides of pan.
11. Gently swirl mixture through batter with a knife, taking care not to over mix.
12. Bake for 30-40 mins convection (40-50 mins, regular oven) or until cake tester comes out clean.
13. Let cake cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto cooling rack.
14. Dust with powdered sugar for decoration.

### Hot Milk Cake for Strawberry "Shortcake"

This recipe feeds strawberry shortcake to a crowd for very little money (compared to buying shortcakes) and very little time. It is actually very good. We double the recipe and bake it in a jelly roll pan to feed many.

2 cups sugar  
2 cups flour  
4 eggs  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 cup milk  
1 stick butter  
1 ½ tsp vanilla

1. Heat milk and butter until butter is melted and mixture is hot.
2. Set aside to cool and beat eggs.

3. Add sugar, flour, baking powder, and vanilla to eggs.
4. Fold in cooled milk mixture.
5. Mix well.
6. Bake in a 9 x 13 greased pan at 350' 20-30 mins convection (or 30-40 minutes regular).

### Strawberry Dip

This is a very sweet dip for strawberries. I sometimes serve it with fresh fruit on a fruit plate instead of salad for a special company dinner. Kids love it!

2 bars cream cheese  
3 cups powdered sugar

16 oz. Cool Whip  
2 tsp vanilla

1. Cream the cream cheese until fluffy.
2. Cream in the powdered sugar and vanilla until well blended.
3. Add Cool Whip by folding in and stirring gently.
4. Serve with strawberries or any other fruit.

### 7. Get Connected: NASA site for kids and parents!

Someone on one of my loops just put the NASA site through before the space shuttle was scheduled to launch. Even though it didn't launch, I still thought I would include the site here as it is very entertaining and educational! I was even reminded of the old trick to learn the planets: My Very Educated Mama Just Served Us Nine Pizzas. Or Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto. Like any site, I can't vouch for its entirety, but what I saw looks fun! Check it out with your kids: <http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

### 9. This and That: Thoughts from TFT

\*Nothing Could Have Prepared Me for Parenting.....

Long, fussy nights. Evenings walking the floor trying to solve the problem, then finally making room for the "angelic being" at the foot of my bed. Afternoons filled with needs that I could humanly never meet....anxiety, fussiness, tear-filled moments, overwhelming joy, laughter. Nights with two, three, four, or five of them all needing Mom and Dad at the same time....all gathered in our room, some half asleep, others needing consoled or comforted. Nights in which Ray would finally drift off to sleep by midnight, only to wake up at four to take off for work and find

the needy one still in our bed. Yes, it's very true....nothing could have prepared me for parenting.....teens and young adults. (Long ellipses intended!)

If you began reading the above paragraph thinking I was describing parenting babies, I tricked you! ☺ I can remember when I had six children twelve and under (ten years ago), and I thought parenting babies and toddlers was so challenging. I was tired, overwhelmed, and overworked. I thought it would be so much easier in ten years. Ha!

Recently we had a wave of “overwhelming parenting days” with our teens and young adults. Nothing too big, nothing too out of the ordinary...just six “kids” twelve through twenty-two needing their parents all at the same time. Prior to the last few years, I had no idea that parenting teens and young adults took so much emotional energy AND so much time.

Ray spent one evening with J and Lisa discussing J's possible job change and giving them advice. I was with the two oldest girls that same evening, going over the camp they hosted for young ladies, followed by getting Cami off to serve at Joni and Friends and phone calls with updates and prayer needs a couple of times a day. We met with Kayla and some missionaries and a missions director (two different meetings)—along with some long, heart-felt talks with just the three of us and dinner out. Jonathan needed help getting his “responsibility” level up to his “ability” level. (I'm sure you can figure that out for yourself!) Kara went away to debate camp and didn't have Mom or big sisters there to encourage her every hour—and I ended up talking on the phone with her two to five times a day and emailing her at least twenty times a day! It was a tiring week. Every hour of each evening the phone seemed to ring or we were tied up with one of the older children---or both.

At the end of the week, Ray and I fell into bed and discussed how challenging our parenting is right now---how many needs there are and how inadequate we feel to meet them---and I said, “You know what? These kids are consuming our lives!”

We looked at each other and broke out into laughter as we both said, “No duh---that's what they're supposed to do!”

It was good to laugh about it. For only two days later, I was in a heap of tears over it again, feeling like I was making mistakes, worrying about different things, and generally overwhelmed---much like I used to feel twelve years ago---only worse—I'm older and, well, hormonal!

Twelve years ago, we spanked them all soundly and put them to bed. Twelve years ago, they couldn't have their ice cream if they didn't eat their vegetables. Twelve years ago, we overloaded the newborn with colic drops and took turns

walking the floor---but it didn't seem as "life-long" or "life-shaping" as today's parenting issues are.

I used to cry because I was tired. Now I lie awake—and make myself more tired--worrying and praying over our teens and young adults. I used to think I was a bad parent if my kids had bad behavior. Now I think I'm a bad parent if I don't "look into the future" and see their needs before they arise. I used to worry that they didn't do enough math, now I worry that they aren't doing enough praying!

Then I get thankful....thankful that I'm crying because I miss my fourteen year old so much while she's at debate camp that I'm considering driving the four hours to pick her up and bring her home to Mama. Thankful that my seventeen year old's greatest need this week is trying to witness to an unsaved fellow counselor at the deaf children's camp—and keeping the teenage boys from trying to "go with her." (I'm not sure *where* they want to go with her!) Thankful that my nineteen year old isn't into drugs....but is so into Jesus, she can't decide when, where, and how to get on the field and bring the lost to Him. Thankful that our married son is such a diligent worker and very sensitive to not hurting his former boss that he wants to talk to Ray about it for hours. Thankful that we have the issues we do have...instead of other issues that are way too heavy for me.

And thankful that God led us twenty-two years ago into this path known as home schooling and the style of Biblical parenting that teaches young children to obey and submit (most of the time!) and older children to love and honor their parents--even though things do not go perfectly, it's sure better than the alternative I see out there today!

So....here Ray and I go again...doing what we always do when things are rough...regrouping, laughing, holding each other, praying, talking through everything, misunderstanding each other (then making up!), spending huge amounts of time talking to our kids.....sure, parenting at any age is tough, but as I said before, nothing could have prepared me to parent..... teens and young adults!

## **10. Article from Training for Triumph**

"Tips for Teaching Composition, Part I"

By Donna Reish

I have spent a great deal of space in articles giving tips for the Key Word Outline (KWO) approach to writing. This month, and in a future month, I will focus on composition writing that uses other approaches. While this information is primarily for those who do *not* use CQLA or WBLA, our curricula users will gain some insights---and see why we do things the way we do in CQLA and WBLA for both the first two essays of each month (the KWO essays) and the “big” essays for the final two weeks of each month (the original essays).

### **Do not confuse writing and penmanship.**

I say this in any home school/writing/language arts/parenting advice I give because it's true! Writing (or composition) is a thinking skill (as well as a grammar skill!). Penmanship is an artistic skill. Just because your child is unable to pen the words he has in his mind and heart does not mean that he cannot write! Our dyslexic daughter was highly intelligent but unable to pen sentences for herself (because of spelling and penmanship difficulties—both associated with her dyslexia) until she was nearly fourteen years old. (At that time, she began writing the fourth and fifth grade level of WBLA and CQLA!). If I had just assumed that penmanship is writing---so Kayla is unable to write--she would not be the accomplished young lady she is today.

If your child has penmanship difficulties related to a learning disability, let him dictate to you all of the thoughts and information he has within him. Set aside thirty minutes a day just to type for him as he dictates to you. Let him see that he is, indeed, a good writer because he is a good thinker. And, separate out the penmanship aspect of school as one subject among many---one that is art and not thinking and one that is not needed to be successful. (As opposed to putting so much emphasis on that one subject that all of his academic endeavors are tainted by it.) But it is just that---one subject, known as penmanship---not the whole of his school learning. (The same is true for spelling, which is one

aspect of school and not indicative of a child's ability to think and write.)

Sure, Kayla still did penmanship all throughout her school days—until her senior year of high school, believe it or not. (It was kind of funny to see her one minute writing an English curriculum on the computer and the next minute see her writing in her elementary penmanship book as late as seventeen years of age. But she was diligent and determined to at least get her penmanship legible enough to fill out forms, etc.)

Also, if your child could write much more than he does if it wasn't for the penmanship aspect of writing, teach him to type as soon as possible (as early as age ten through twelve, if he's a fluent reader). At first it will be laborious, and he will feel like he will never become a good typist, but stick with it. Put it in his school schedule everyday. Just get a typing program from Best Buy or some other electronics store, and have him start at the beginning and work with it a little each day. In the meantime, type for him---and let him see that he is a good thinker and a good writer.

### **Use a directed writing approach**

Beware of “composition idea books” as composition courses. Most unit study curriculums and many grammar curriculums will list ideas of things for children to write about. These will be fine topics, such as “Write about an animal you would like to be if you were an animal” or “Write a journal entry as if you were a slave” or “Write a story about one of the animals on the ark.” These are okay in and of themselves, but the problem is that they do not teach children how to write. If all we needed were ideas, we could just have our students write about anything they are learning in science, literature, or social studies.

Giving a student writing ideas or “writing cues” often frustrates him. The fact is that he does not know *how* to write what he is being asked to write. He doesn’t know how to voice this to you (i.e. “Should I write this in the first person or the third person?” “What should each paragraph contain?” “How do I write dialogue using quotation marks?” “How do the people talk during the slave era?”), but he knows that he does not know how to do what is being asked of him. Sometimes he says something entirely different (“This is boring.” “I don’t like to write.” “I don’t have anything to say.”), but what he probably means is that he does not know how to do it.

Enter the directed writing approach—an approach that not only tells the student what to write, but teaches him how to outline, how to formulate paragraphs, how to do the skills that the type of writing he is assigned requires (dialogue with quotation marks, first person journaling, etc.). If you do not use CQLA or WBLA, find a curriculum for original essays (non-Key Word Outline writing) that teaches the student *how* to write---not one that gives writing ideas. I used *Writing for 100 Days* with my high schoolers before I wrote CQLA/WBLA (and my current composition-only project, *Meaningful Compositions*). It requires the teacher to walk the student through it somewhat, and it does not go paragraph by paragraph, outline type by outline type, but it does explain various types of writing fairly well. I also understand that *Writing Strands* uses a more directed writing approach than many writing courses. I am unsure if the teacher gets a lot of critiquing/editing help in this course, but I think it does take the student through a step-by-step process as opposed to a writing idea book.

### **Teach that a paragraph is a unit of thought.**

One of the first things a student must learn when he writes original compositions is that a paragraph is a unit of thought. One of the greatest benefits to using the Key Word Outline approach (used in

the Institute for Excellence in Writing and *Character Quality Language Arts*) is that a student learns quickly what a paragraph is. By making Key Word Outlines from good paragraphs, a student quickly sees that all of these things in this paragraph are about the same topic and together form a paragraph. He sees that a new paragraph is beginning because a new topic is beginning.

One way to teach that a paragraph is a unit of thought in original compositions is through outlining. When you have your student outline original writings paragraph by paragraph, he begins to understand that everything he puts in this paragraph note section must be about one topic; when he wants to start a new topic, he understands that he starts another set of notes. (In CQLA, we put “Topic of this paragraph” on the top line of his note taking section to help further cement this concept.)

Students who write original essays without outlining often have “paragraph problems.” That is, they simply do not know when to end a paragraph and when to begin another paragraph. (Before I started using the approaches I utilize in CQLA, I had high school tutoring students turn in two and three page papers of one paragraph!) Through using the Key Word Outline approach for some of their essays (writing directly from a paragraph)---and outlining their original essays---students begin to learn what a paragraph is.

When students outline, they are forced to think through what they want to write much more than when they “just write.” This is especially true when they write the topic line at the beginning of each set of paragraph notes. This forces them to examine what they really want that paragraph to contain---then when they write the notes below that “topic line” for each paragraph, they are reminded that “Oh, this paragraph is about his birth. I can’t write about the fire when he was ten here.”

Of course, with young students (and even with older students who have not written a lot), you will probably want to begin with original essays of only one paragraph in length. Help your student narrow his focus as much as possible. A new writer (and sometimes even experienced writers like this author!) wants to write about *everything*. He will become frustrated and dislike writing if you do not help him see that that one paragraph is only going to be three to ten sentences in length; thus, he can only write a very small portion of information for his one paragraph essay.

Walk him through this narrowing process. *Okay, your essay is going to be about John Wesley. What do you want to say about John Wesley?* (He will, of course, either say “I don’t know” or “Everything—you know his life.”) Help him get it down to one small portion of his life---maybe the day of the fire or the day he fell off his horse studying the Bible as he rode or the day he found Christ, etc.

He needs to see that a paragraph really isn’t that much information. He needs to see that it can only contain a very, very small portion of information since it’s not that long. Keep his focus on the narrowed topic as he takes his notes.

### **Start with a couple of easy essay types: biographical and instructional.**

The two easiest longer compositions that I have found for students to begin with (outside of one paragraph writings) are the biographical and instructional. I think the reason they are easiest is because students know more easily where to plug their information into in them.

For example, in a biographical essay (narrowed down to fit the paragraph assignment—i.e. biographical overview of this person in

five paragraphs; biographical essay about him being a soul winner of ten paragraphs, etc.), students understand easily that the birth must come before childhood, the childhood must come before his adult life, etc. A student can more quickly see where to plug in his points in a biographical essay than many other types.

In an instructional essay, the same type of thing happens. If a student is writing an instructional essay about how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, he knows that he cannot cut the sandwich in half before he spreads on the peanut butter and jelly. It naturally has divisions and breaking points within the topic.

Thus, when moving out from paragraphs and onto other types of writing, use any type of outlining you and your student are comfortable with (formal outlining, numbered outlining, stars and smileys---just so you and he can use it), and be sure to show exact paragraph breaks in the outline. Writing will be a breeze when the “thinking aspect” is done during outlining (not as much rewriting, filling in, etc. as that is all done while thinking and making notes).

Watch this spot in future months for more on writing instruction, including how to connect grammar to writing, tips for teaching various types of writing, and more.

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