

Introduction

What is *Daily Writing Fundamentals*?

Daily Writing Fundamentals is a series designed to enhance your current writing curriculum. Comprised of four books for grades 5–6, 7–8, 9–10, and 11–12, each volume includes student grade-level writing examples, as well as selections from well-known authors. The student examples have been gathered from over 30 years of teaching, and have been edited and revised throughout the years.

Developed by a group of five experienced language arts teachers, trainers, and literacy specialists, these brief daily writing activities can fit into any classroom schedule.

Daily Writing Fundamentals is best practice!

Writing is a task that can be challenging for students to master. Other than grammar and mechanics, it is a skill closely connected to reading and critical thinking. Writing difficulties can be overcome through a variety of engaging activities such as making writing a collaborative experience. Most students enjoy reading and discussing other students' writing; it provides them with a sense of security, and may allow a greater sense of ease when analyzing and sharing their own writing.

Try the following best practices in your classroom:

- Study, evaluate, and discuss models of good writing with students.
- Provide students with opportunities to reflect on what good writing is and how writing can be improved.
- Encourage students to spend sufficient time on a piece of writing to learn from it.
- Have students write often and in every class.

Daily Writing Fundamentals is designed around these practices to provide helpful models that will encourage your students to think about writing, to improve their own writing, and to make the art of writing part of their own lifelong learning goals.

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Using *Daily Writing Fundamentals*

The 32 weekly units are very flexible. Units can be adapted, questions can be combined, and you should feel free to add questions of your own. You may want to write the daily question on the board or on an overhead, or you can copy the five weekly questions and distribute them to students. Ample space has been provided throughout the book for you and your students to make notes.

The majority of the activities will only take your students a few minutes to complete. Some selections may take longer. Consider assigning these as homework.

The selections are numbered but don't have to be used in sequence. To focus on particular skill areas, use the convenient skill chart to find which selections address your students' needs.

Note: It is important to review each selection before use with your class. Because the student examples have been gathered from real-life experiences, some students may be sensitive to the content.

Skill Chart

Skill	Selection	Skill	Selection	Skill	Selection
Analyzing writing	1, 2, 6, 18, 30	Generating effective ideas	7, 10, 13, 21, 25	Sentence combining	14
Argumentation	18	Genre	6	Sentence structure/fluency	31, 32
Audience awareness	1, 28, 29	Organization	3, 6, 7, 13, 18, 29, 31	Setting	10, 26
Author's purpose	1	Paragraph development	5, 26	Sharing	16, 26
Business letter	29	Paraphrasing	17	Spelling	14
Capitalization	12, 19	Persuasive form	32	Subject/verb agreement	9
Categorizing	7	Poetry	2, 5, 22	Supporting details	6, 9, 18, 23, 28, 31
Characterization	26	Point of view	1	Tense	3, 10, 11, 30
Compare/contrast	2	Pronoun/antecedent agreement	9, 18	Theme/ideas	3, 9, 18, 23
Dialogue	26	Prose	30	Thesis	3
Effective development	1	Punctuation	6, 8, 12, 14, 19	Tone/voice	10, 14, 32
Effective introduction	23, 31	Reflection	27	Transitions	9
Effective conclusion	9, 14, 18, 23, 28	Repetition	30	Usage	15, 24
Experimenting with form	22	Responding to a prompt	3, 14, 16	Using writing models	22
Experimenting with language	5, 26	Résumé/college application	4	Word choice	1, 28, 32
Figurative language	1, 30	Revision	5, 7, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29	Writing response groups	20, 26, 32

Selection 1

¹ The bee is in the main an honest citizen; she prefers legitimate to illegitimate business; she is never an outlaw until her proper sources of supply fail; she will not touch honey as long as honey-yielding flowers can be found; she always prefers to go to the fountain-head, and dislikes to take her sweets at second hand. ² But in the fall, after the flowers have failed, she can be tempted. ³ The bee-hunter takes advantage of this fact; he betrays her with a little honey. ⁴ He wants to steal her stores, and he first encourages her to steal his, then follows the thief home with her booty. ⁵ This is the whole trick of the bee-hunter. ⁶ The bees never suspect his game, else by taking a circuitous route they could easily baffle him. ⁷ But the honey-bee has absolutely no wit or cunning outside of her special gifts as a gatherer and storer of honey. ⁸ She is a simple-minded creature, and can be imposed upon by any novice. ⁹ Yet it is not every novice that can find a bee-tree. ¹⁰ The sportsman may track his game to its retreat by the aid of his dog, but in hunting the honey-bee one must be his own dog, and track his game through an element in which it leaves no trail. ¹¹ It is a task for a sharp, quick eye, and may test the resources of the best wood-craft. ¹² One autumn when I devoted much time to this pursuit, as the best means of getting at nature and the open-air exhilaration, my eye became so trained that bees were nearly as easy to it as birds. ¹³ I saw and heard bees wherever I went. ¹⁴ One day, standing on a street corner in a great city, I saw above the trucks and the traffic a line of bees carrying off sweets from some grocery or confectionery shop.

—*Birds and Bees, Sharp Eyes and Other Papers,*
John Burroughs, 1837–1921

Selection 26

There is no writing sample for this week’s exercises. Have fun with these exercises, and be ready to share your final product with the class.

Daily Student Prompts

DAY 1

Select a character from television, a movie, history, current politics, a cartoon (the character does not have to be human), or school that most of your classmates would know. If you choose an individual with very distinguishable characteristics or speech, this assignment will be more enjoyable. Describe this individual’s physical characteristics in a well-written paragraph. **You may not use the character’s name in your writing at any point this week.** You may write this assignment in either first person or third person. Try to be as detailed as possible.

DAY 2

Add a sense of place to your paragraph from Day 1. You don’t necessarily need to place the character in a predictable place. In other words, if you were writing about a politician, you could place him in salsa class instead of his office. Be creative here.

DAY 3

Introduce dialogue in your paragraph (you might need to expand your writing to multiple paragraphs at this point). Think of your character’s personality, and try to match his/her dialect to his/her personality. Of course, you could play with this aspect of the assignment and have your politician rap instead of just using straightforward dialog.

DAY 4

Edit and revise your writing. You might need to expand certain aspects of your work. For instance, you might develop your character’s actions (maybe more about the politician’s salsa class, for example). Remember, even though you might have used generous humor in your creation, hopefully your classmates will be able to recognize your character.

DAY 5

Share your writing products with a writing-response group or the entire class—whichever your instructor prefers.

Selection 31

¹ In Daniel Anderson’s, “Sunflowers in a Field,” Anderson uses imagery and diction to create a tone of uplifting assurance. ² This tone changes from upbeat and hopeful to indifferent. ³ This shift in tone accurately displays the apathy mankind naturally possesses.

⁴ First, Anderson uses imagery to create an uplifting tone of assurance. ⁵ The descriptions of the sunflowers and goldfinches are upbeat and attractive. ⁶ The goldfinches are described as being like “drizzled lemon drops (and) like lozenges of candied yellow light.” ⁷ Through this, an image of the gold finch is portrayed as bright and gentle. ⁸ In slight contrast, the sunflowers are described as “fires, like silk coronas blazing west.” ⁹ It can be concluded that the sunflowers are a little more forceful than the “soft” goldfinches. ¹⁰ Through these contrasting images in nature, humans are assured that they can live their lives “with greater sympathy.” ¹¹ The images of the birds with the sunflowers create a pleasant relation with humans and nature. ¹² Through this relation, people can gain more insight into themselves, as well as the world around them. ¹³ This in turn, gives them “greater sympathy” for nature as well as man kind.

¹⁴ Furthermore, Anderson’s use of imagery produces a tone of indifference. ¹⁵ For example, image of the “pewter cold-front clouds” signals the end of the “resolution” to live life with “greater sympathy” as well as the end of the goldfinches and sunflowers. ¹⁶ This image suggests that when an event occurs that would appear to inhibit man from attaining a “resolution” that the average man or woman would take an apathetic approach and abandon their promise.

¹⁷ Not only does the imagery reinforce the tone of indifference, but the diction does as well. ¹⁸ The speaker notes that people are

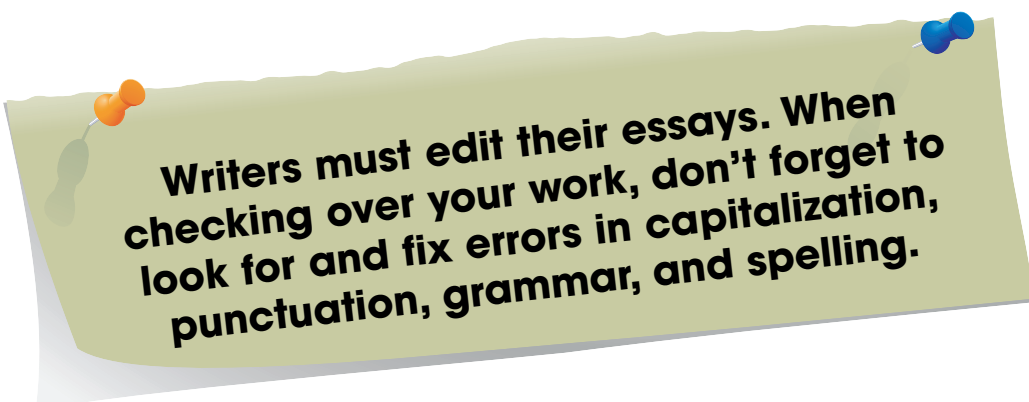
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Selection 31

“intent on picking up the telephone” to speak with friends.¹⁹ The word “intent” suggests that one may desire to fulfill a promise, however, there is no guarantee that one will succeed.²⁰

Furthermore, the speaker notes one will “vow to never, ever, ever” allow distance to grow between them and their friend.²¹ The repetition of “ever” portrays the passion one’s resolution possesses.²² However, “sleep settles just a little more.”²³ Through this it is suggested that with a “little” drowsiness one succumbs to apathy.²⁴ Therefore, people seem to settle with calling “perhaps some other time.”²⁵ The word “perhaps” is uncertain.²⁶ This, also, strengthens the idea that the task will never be accomplished.

²⁷ Through Anderson’s use of imagery, it can be concluded that the first tone portrayed is hopeful and upbeat.²⁸ The peaceful coexistence of two.²⁹ Somewhat contrasting things give humans assurance that they will have the ability to accomplish personal resolutions.³⁰ Anderson’s diction and imagery also shifts the tone.³¹ To one of indifference.³² The images of vanishing goldfinches takes away the assurance instilled in humans.³³ Thus, leaving them with indifference and apathy.



Writers must edit their essays. When checking over your work, don't forget to look for and fix errors in capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and spelling.

