



Before Papers Come Paragraphs

Introductory Unit: Page One—The Very Beginning Lesson 3: Why Writing Well Matters (In the Real World) / Parent Guide

The Denim *Beret*
Writing Program

Notes on Lesson 3

I have always found it rather sad that many students spend years studying a subject without understanding its value for their lives. Writing is such a basic and useful skill to have—one of the “3 R’s,” in fact—that I feel I would be doing my students a profound disservice by taking them farther in their studies without first helping them understand why they should bother. Simply telling them “you need to know how to write” isn’t enough. I want them to take ownership of this subject, because they will pour so much of themselves into their efforts to become excellent writers. To compel them to do that, they need to have reasons to care.

You may want to read this lesson with your student and discuss it as you go. Even if you don’t, though, be aware that this lesson is unusual in that it has an exercise *within* the lesson this time. This should be completed when directed, not after your student finishes the entire lesson. The exercise is a two-paragraph essay about your student’s views on writing. It should be completed in the “Writing Exercises” section of your student’s notebook.

Please do not grade this essay. It is just an exercise meant to get your student thinking. Note its completion *before* your student continues with the lesson, and discuss it as needed. The essay should contain the following parts:

Paragraph 1: reflection on student’s feelings about writing (6-sentence minimum)

Paragraph 2: thoughts on the value of learning how to write well (6-sentence minimum)

Evaluation Guide

WARM-UP

In the lesson 2 parent guide, I explained writing warm-ups in detail—what they are and how to evaluate and score them. Please refer to that if you missed it. Briefly, check your student's warm-up for the following criteria only:

- continuous writing for a minimum of 10 minutes
- prompt was followed
- completion of approximately a half page (consider size of handwriting when judging this)
- evidence of effort

Record a completion grade on the page when you are satisfied with your student's work.

LESSON ASSIGNMENT

This assignment is an open-book quiz on lessons 2 and 3. Your student may need to review lesson 2 before beginning the quiz.

Directions: Answer the questions in the spaces provided. Please use dark blue, green, or purple for your answers. Write in complete sentences, and add lines as needed. This is an open-book quiz, but first see what you remember by answering as many questions as you can without help.

1. What does the following quote mean: "The pen is mightier than the sword?" Give an example of how this can be true.

Those who can write well can change our world in ways the sword never can. While the sword can force change by placing the strong in positions of authority over the weak, the pen can move hearts and change minds.

2. What are the two natures of writing? Identify and explain both.

a. craft

b. art

3. What is the ultimate purpose of writing lessons, according to lesson 2?

To contribute something meaningful to the world.

4. What are the two kinds of art mentioned in lesson 3? (HINT: they are not specific arts, such as painting or music)

a. practical (i.e., business letters, academic papers, emails, personal letters, presentations)

b. fine (i.e., stories, poetry, novels, essays, memoirs)

5. Name three ways in which knowing how to write well can be valuable.

Possible answers might include the following...

- Allows for confident communication for any purpose..
- Clean writing increases personal credibility.
- Removes dependence on others when polished writing is important.
- Needed for many jobs and careers.
- Aids in daily communication, such as emails.
- May be required for educational programs, such as higher degrees and career training
- Deep understanding makes reading a richer experience.
- Can be fun, meaningful, and satisfying.
- Never a waste of time.

a.

b.

c.