

# THE LIFEGUARD'S LOCKER

A parent/teacher manual for  
*Jump In:*  
*A Workbook for*  
*Reluctant and Eager Writers*

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(provided for reference)

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## Dear Parent and Teacher,

I wish I could sit down and talk with you about the rich subject of writing. Since that is not possible, I will have to settle for making a list. May God, whose words are life, bless your work.

1. This workbook is for middle school students. High school students who have had little practice in writing or who are reluctant writers will also find it helpful.
2. You will need to use a student-friendly grammar book in addition to this workbook (see Grammar Resources, pages 55-56).
3. There is enough teaching material in here for at least **two years**. The **10-Minute Writing Plunges** will take one year; the student section will take at least another. Avoid running both programs concurrently. Teachers successfully have used the **Plunges** as breaks between the chapters, though, like a calming stretch between races.
4. The student workbook section has more than 240 days of material and work, including the longer assignments. Choose what you want your students to learn. You are the best judge.
5. Chapter headings labeled "The Basics" are **prerequisites** for the rest of the persuasion and exposition chapters.
6. Each day's work is labeled a *Skill*. Each skill has a **Now it's your turn** section that will take 5 to 20 minutes to complete.
7. At the end of some chapters or skills, students will pause to work on a longer assignment that may take anywhere from two to ten days to complete.
8. Each of these longer assignments has a suggested writing schedule, making it easy for you and your students to plan.
9. When students are through with the longer assignment, they may return to the *Skill* days.
10. Because a reluctant writer is more likely to write his opinion than a report, the student workbook begins with opinions and persuasion rather than exposition.
11. This workbook teaches a *Chicago*-style bibliography to simplify the process but MLA parenthetical notations and in-text citations for clarity. For writers of this age, it is important to focus on skills and practice, not on a certain association's style.
12. In order to avoid the pesky and cumbersome pronouns *he/she* and *he or she*, I use the generic *he* most often (apologies to female students).

## Jump In Objectives

### I. The Course

1. To develop an age-appropriate competence in all four areas of writing: persuasion, exposition, description, and narration.
2. To make writing accessible by using incremental steps in the teaching process.
3. To provide exposure to and practice in persuasion, exposition, description, narration, and poetry.
4. To provide grade-appropriate examples of good writing in order to encourage, inspire, and instruct the student.
5. To foster successful writing by breaking down the process into smaller pieces before giving the student the larger assignment.
6. To reinforce lessons by a student’s response in the Now It’s Your Turn sections.
7. To balance a difficult assignment by keeping the word count low.
8. To foster creativity and imagination needed for descriptive and narrative writing.
9. To engage the student by employing a conversational tone in the text.

### II. Attitudes

1. To foster a love for writing by a series of small successes.
2. To dismantle a fear of writing in reluctant writers.
3. To encourage an interest in writing by beginning with opinions and persuasion.
4. To delight fearful writers by allowing them to write on a guided topic for 10 minutes without being assessed or graded (the 10-Minute Writing Plunges).
5. To encourage eager writers by providing interesting assignments.

### III. Skills

1. To gain competence in writing persuasively by learning and practicing the Do List and by learning and avoiding the Don’t List.
2. To develop organizational skills needed for taking notes, organizing notes, and writing essays or reports.
3. To practice organizational skills such as brainstorming and using the cluster method.
4. To learn to communicate clearly by following step-by-step instructions and by organizing before writing.
5. To develop thinking skills by completing assignments such as cause and effect, and compare and contrast.
6. To practice beginning in the body of a composition in order to disarm the fear of writing.
7. To strengthen proofreading skills by using the Mistake Medic, a self-guided proofreading tool.
8. To further writing skills in accomplished writers by assigning challenging and interesting work.
9. To strengthen skills needed for real-life writing by completing such assignments as a letter to a librarian, a newspaper article, and a how-to paper.
10. To develop a greater skill in the hidden intricacies of descriptive writing.
11. To practice skills in capturing the reader’s attention, whether in fiction or nonfiction.
12. To practice writers’ devices such as dovetailing, compare and contrast, hooks, and patterns of three.
13. To evaluate other writers’ work, thereby learning how to critique one’s own.