

A Typical Teaching Week

These guidelines are intended to help bring some predictability to lesson planning.

Although the elements of grammar are important aspects of this course, its primary focus is writing and rhetoric. We recommend that you teach a simple, but rich, grammar curriculum in parallel with the lessons in *Writing & Rhetoric: Encomium & Vituperation*. By simple, we mean to suggest that you avoid a grammar program with a writing component. Two different writing methods would most likely work against each other and cause an imbalance in the school day. Instead, look for a grammar program that focuses on grammatical concepts, provides plenty of practice sentences, and encourages diagramming.

You may want to provide same-day grammar instruction several days a week, preferably separating Writing & Rhetoric from grammar study by an hour or two. Or, you may want to alternate weeks between a grammar program and Writing & Rhetoric. This requires some negotiation in your language arts program for the year. If you aim to do two Writing & Rhetoric books per school year, that would equal approximately twenty-five lessons. If you spend one week on each lesson, that leaves you with about ten weeks to focus on grammar. However, as the reading selections grow longer and the writing tasks more extensive, you may need to spend more time on each Writing & Rhetoric lesson according to the needs of your students. You will have to choose a grammar program with these considerations in mind.

Please note that multiple opportunities for practice are built into the Writing & Rhetoric series. If you find that your students have mastered a particular form of writing, you should feel free to skip some lessons. In this case, some teachers choose to present the historical material from skipped lessons as part of their history lessons.

Day One

1. The teacher models fluency by reading the text aloud while students follow along silently.
2. “Tell It Back” (Narration) and “Talk About It” should immediately follow the reading of the text, while the text is still fresh in the students’ minds.

Narration, the process of “telling back,” can be done in a variety of ways. Pairs of students can retell the story to each other, or selected individuals can narrate orally to the entire class. Solo students can tell back the story into a recording device or to an instructor. At this age, written narrative summaries, outlines, and dramatic reenactments can be done with skill. The process of narration is intended to improve comprehension and long-term memory.

Annotation is now included under “Tell It Back” as a standard part of the reading process. The lesson readings have generally grown in length, and annotations can help a student easily locate vocabulary words, proper nouns, and important concepts for drafting essays.

“Talk About It” is designed to help students analyze the meaning of their reading and to see analogous situations, both in the world and in their own lives.

Days Two and Three

1. As time allows, the teacher can ask students to reread the text silently and annotate it for main ideas, vocabulary words, and important concepts.
2. Students work with the text through the “Go Deeper” and “Writing Time” exercises. “Go Deeper” is a feature in the first and third portions of the book and is all about practicing important skills essential to each lesson. “Writing Time,” which appears in the middle portion of the book, includes sentence play, copiousness, and the encomium/vituperation exercises themselves. You will probably want to take more than one day for this step.

Day Four

1. Rather than going directly to revision, we recommend that students take a breather from their essays for a day while they work on their speaking skills. Keeping a day between essay completion and revision helps students to look at their work with fresh eyes. However, teachers may find it valuable to pair students together to read their essays out loud and give each other ideas for revision. As an aid to partner feedback, a rubric is included in the “Speak It” section of lesson 7 and also at the back of the book.
2. The “Speak It” section creates opportunities for students to memorize, recite, play word games, and playact. Please consider using a recording device whenever it suits the situation. When using electronics, the student should listen to his recording to get an idea of what sounds right and what needs to be improved. Have students read the elocution instructions at the back of the book to help them work on skill in delivery.

Day Five

At this level, students will continue to work toward a foundation in revision. The “Revise It” section provides basic exercises that introduce students to revision and proofreading. In the essay-writing portion of this book, “Revise It” also provides a self-editing checklist that covers some of the most important aspects of improving an essay. Most students can do rudimentary self-editing at this age and provide some useful feedback to each other. However, teachers are still the best source for giving editorial feedback and requesting rewrites.