



Faltering Ownership

Year-Long Language Arts Plan
and 12 Writing Projects
Stage 3

Faltering Ownership



Copyright © 2015 Julie (Bogart) Sweeney Brave Writer LLC

Photography © Julie (Bogart) Sweeney and Tammy Wahl

All rights reserved Julie (Bogart) Sweeney

To report errors, contact help@bravewriter.com

Design & Typesetting by Timothy Victor

ISBN 13: 978-0-9905133-7-7

ISBN 10: 0-9905133-7-8

Contents

Introduction	8
Faltering Ownership Principles	11
The Year-Long Program	18
PART ONE	
LANGUAGE ARTS	22
BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE	30
Poetry Teatimes	30
Weekly Movies	32
Nature Study	33
Art Appreciation	34
Music Appreciation	35
Theatre	36
Shakespeare	37
Visual Journals	38
PART TWO	
ORAL LANGUAGE	42

PART THREE

WRITING PROJECTS 44

SEMESTER ONE

Month 1	Wild Words	46
Month 2	Dust Jacket Book Review	62
Month 3	Big Juicy Conversations	69
	Mini Report: Natural Disasters	72
Month 4	Diary: Historical Person	82
Month 5	End-of-the-year Family Letter	89

SEMESTER TWO

Month 6	Headlines (Viewpoint)	98
	Party School Report	103
Month 7	Oral Report	107
	Party School Report	114
Month 8	The Pitch (Advertisement)	118
	Party School Report	127
Month 9	Deep Dive into Literary Elements	129
	Party School Report	140
Month 10	Drafting and Completing the Report	141

Bonus Projects

Bonus Project 1	The Art of Fiction	143
Bonus Project 2	Poetry Play	149

COMPLETION REWARDS 160

Introduction

There's a moment in every baby's life where she goes from wobbler to toddler. During the "wobbling" stage, she clings to tabletops, your pant legs, dangling adult hands, and the back of the stroller to keep her balance. The strides come in bursts where she "lets go" and toddles across the room into your loving arms. During those excursions, joy, optimism, and cheers greet her brave efforts. Sometimes, when you aren't looking, however, she'll let go and toddle on her own, only to lose her balance and Bam! Baby goes tush over teakettle!

There's a moment in every baby's life where she goes from wobbler to toddler.

Eventually, though, she tries again. Her desire to walk is much greater than her fear of falling. Through repeated wobbly, uncertain, glorious stumbles, the walker is born! She goes from toppling to toddling, and eventually to skipping, running, cartwheeling, bikeriding, and sometimes, snowboard flying and high-dive diving! During the transition from crawling baby to walking child, we offer a hand, kindness, and support. We still carry our 12- to 18-month-old children on our hips or in our backpacks, especially when we're late or they're tired. We use strollers for young walkers because they aren't fast enough, nor able to walk long distances. We trust over time this child will grow longer, stronger legs, and gain the ability to walk everywhere without any help whatsoever.

These are faltering walkers. Sometimes they walk! Sometimes they're incredibly proud of their ability to walk, so much so you become frustrated that they won't let you carry them when you're in a hurry. They might take the scenic path, which leads them to the curb, to the edge of a cliff, or the middle of the street. Sometimes they climb the outside of the stairwell in the courtyard at the apartment building and scare you senseless!

Other times, they collapse into a limp collection of muscles and bones, tears erupting from the corners of their eyes, unwilling to put together a short string of steps to the front door, while you

haul groceries from the car and the baby from his car seat. These are exasperating faltering walker moments, but they are nonetheless part and parcel of the skill called walking. Eventually, walking will win and the traumatic resistance to walking will be behind all of you.

The faltering ownership stage of growth in writing is similar to this journey. Your child, who now has a taste for his or her own writing voice, will some days attack a writing prompt with alacrity! The project that follows is a joy to all and is completed with ease. Then, the following week when you suggest another similar, wonderful idea for writing, the toddling writer will collapse in a heap on the floor declaring he can't think of anything to write, and that writing is too hard and hurts his hand. It's mystifying! How can this paradox exist within a single child? Why does he write beautifully with creativity and imagination one day, and then hate writing with all his fiery resistance a week later?

Faltering Ownership, my friends.

This is your toddling, wobbling writer who still needs to be carried on occasion, but who also will continue to take greater and greater writing risks—even the kind that scare you at times (when writing is used to vent anger about homeschool, or to eviscerate Aunt Hilda's hairy chin, or to teach his friends how to make a homemade hand grenade). He will find writing to be more and more under his control as he has opportunity to write. But he won't always want to write, and sometimes he will still delegate the hardest parts of the writing tasks to you.

That's a-okay! Just as you learned in the *Partnership Writing* phase of writing development, it's perfectly acceptable to help. As we like to say in *Brave Writer*: "Help helps!" You can be confident that if you provide the right amount of support to your faltering writer, he or she will eventually make the full journey and become an independent, competent, responsible writer.

The parent's role in the faltering ownership stage evolves to companion. You provide two essential ingredients in this wobbly stage: faith and freedom. Your children need to know that when their energies fail, when their enthusiasm wanes, and their efforts don't match their imagined output, they are still within shouting distance of success.

Your confidence (faith) that your fledgling writers will become competent and confident increases your children's willingness to take writing risks.

Not only do you want to believe in your child, you also want to free your child to test-drive the writing process. Pretend that your child is 15 years old, behind the wheel of your car, and you are riding shotgun. There are moments when a shout, or a metaphorical foot jammed into the dashboard may be the reaction you have when your faltering writer crashes into a wall (quits, does a poor job, uses her weakest vocabulary, phones it in, writes how much she hates writing), but on the whole, you will provide a calm, confident, supportive environment for writing practice. Yes, you'll give tips and tricks that helped you to become the writer you are today, but mostly you are along for the ride, creating a safety zone for practice so that eventually your writer can drive away without you.

As your child grows into a sturdy writer, your task will be to supply new tools for writing. Whereas your younger writers drew heavily on personal experiences, stories, and lists for their writing projects, faltering writers will be introduced to the joys of research. Yes, joys! There's real pleasure in delving deeply into a topic of interest or area of study, once the writer has adopted a line of inquiry.

The faltering ownership stage of growth is characterized by writing that is used as a tool for learning, in addition to being a tool for recording one's own experiences. In other words, once children realize that their precious, forming thoughts can be housed in a written format and enjoyed again, they are ready to use writing for its so-called "educational and academic" purposes, as well.

You provide two essential ingredients in this wobbly stage: faith and freedom.

This is not the time to drop all that rich interest-led writing. On the contrary, your children will continue to write using their best vocabulary and most immediate experiences as their primary source material for writing.



FALTERING OWNERSHIP

The Year-Long Program

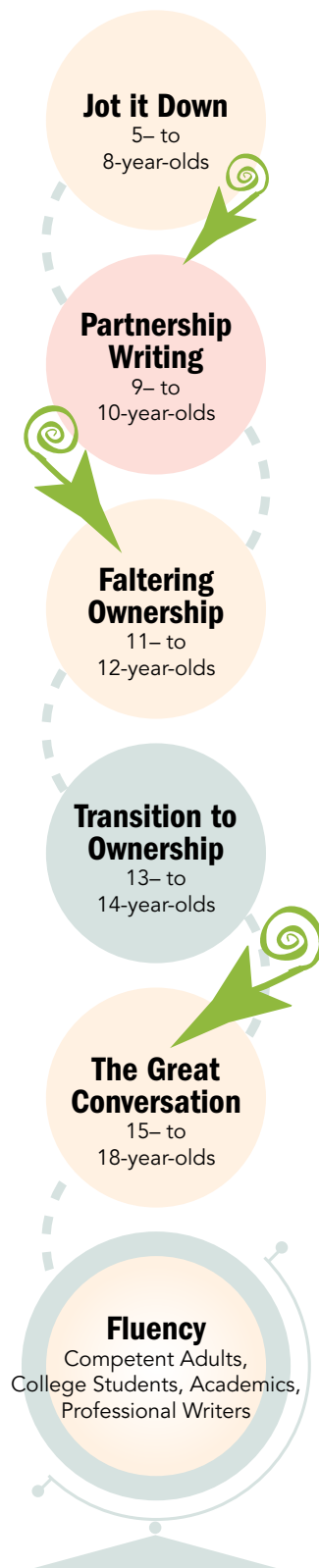
PART ONE LANGUAGE ARTS

Language Arts, in Brave Writer, refers to the mechanics of writing, as well as the enjoyment of literature. In the *Faltering Ownership* stage of growth, students are ready to take responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of their polished writing products according to the skills they've mastered. Their mechanics are not yet fluent, the way an adult writer's are. However, faltering ownership writers are able to return to their own papers to examine them for the handful of punctuation, spelling, and grammar skills they've acquired. They can make their own corrections to their work before a parent comes in behind to mop-up the remaining errors.

Copywork and dictation can be specifically targeted to the areas of difficulty so that students expand their skill set. This age group benefits the most from dictation work. If dictation is done weekly, students will show great progress in their natural aptitude to incorporate their evolving mechanics into their original writing, even when freewriting. Brave Writer teaches four different styles of copywork/dictation and that detail can be found in the *Guidelines for The Arrow*, and in *The Writer's Jungle* (Chapter 1: The Big Language Arts River).

Language Arts

- spelling
- handwriting
- punctuation
- grammar
- literary elements copywork
- dictation
- word origins
- vocabulary development
- paragraphing typing



The Natural Stages of growth in Writing

Original writing, on the other hand, is the language we use to characterize the original thought life of your child that the child wants to preserve in writing.

Original Writing

- narration ideas
- insight
- experience genre
- format
- writing voice
- freewriting
- revision techniques
- research methods
- sentence complexity
- writing style
- word play

The Arrow

The Arrow is a literature guide that is designed for children who are already reading (3rd-6th grades, approximately). *The Arrow* will provide you with four passages for copywork and/or dictation from a selected book: one novel per issue. Each digital magazine contains grammar notes, ideas for teaching spelling and punctuation, and explanations of literary devices found in the passages. *The Arrow* also includes a featured literary element each month. These are the techniques of craft that make quality writing good to read. Each of the issues includes a writing exercise that allows the child to play with the literary element firsthand.

If you want to read books of your own choosing and select your own copywork and dictation passages, feel free to do so! Alternatively, you might wish to blend Arrows with your own selections. Finally, be sure to give your children opportunities to select their own passages to copy from the books they read on days when you aren't using the ones provided in *The Arrow*.

The writing projects in this program facilitate growth in original writing. Your children, in this stage of development, will be able to transcribe their own thoughts with greater and greater ease over the course of the year, as their mechanics pick up speed and accuracy.

In the language arts component, you'll find a routine of graduated practices to use with your child over the course of a ten-month (school year) period. You may start any time (doesn't have to be September in the northern hemisphere or February in the southern). Just know that these practices operate best when the difficulty gradually increases over time. Don't rush. Feel free to stay at a level that is comfortable for your child longer than the plan indicates. This routine should be seen as a model, not as a straightjacket.

Brave Writer Lifestyle

Lastly, the Brave Writer Lifestyle fuels the language arts portion of this program as well. The *Faltering Ownership* program will give you developmental-stage-appropriate suggestions for how to incorporate practices that lead to a language-rich environment in the areas of film, television, nature, art, poetry, theater, word play, and more.

BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE

The Brave Writer Lifestyle is about creating a language-rich environment in your home. *Jot It Down!* and *Partnership Writing* detailed practices for younger children in many of these areas. The website also offers pages with listed resources and suggestions for implementation.

POETRY TEATIMES

Poetry teatimes in the younger years are all about enjoying poetry and sipping tea (no analysis required). That practice can continue as is! However, this age group also benefits from a little targeted poetry exploration to raise the stakes and change up the dynamic a bit.

Probe poetry a bit this year; make it light, natural, and casual.

Pick a poet

Have all the poems read at the poetry teatime be from the same poet. Print out or read a bit about the poet (background, when he or she lived, his or her influences in writing). Have each child select one poem by this poet to read. Enjoy the poems, and see if any similarities or differences stand out when you read several of one poet's writings in a row!

Pick a historical period

Find poems that are written in one particular era of history (sonnets from the 16th century, poems by women in the 18th century, poems written during WW1).

Pick a historical theme

Collect a variety of poems by various authors, even from different time periods, about a particular historical theme: war, civil rights, slavery, women's suffrage, technological advancement, monarchy, religious conflicts, weapon development, abolition, peace.

Pick a universal theme

Courage, hope, love, courtship, family, father-son, mother-daughter, illness, death, birth, friendship, oppression, crime, loss, nature, weather, God, forgiveness, judgment, the universe.

Pick a type of poetry

Sonnets, quatrains, haiku, ballads, song lyrics, villanelles, concrete poems, limericks, free verse, and more. Have everyone bring one example of the chosen type, or conversely, have each child choose a different type of poem to share.

Pick a favorite poem of the week

Tell everyone that this week's poetry teatime will feature a favorite poem of the week by each participant. Give them a week or several days to find a poem to share. Each participant is to keep the poem secret until the teatime when it will be revealed, shared, and enjoyed.

Tips for exploring poetry with this age group

Secret Strings

Michael Rosen (British children’s poet) talks about “Secret Strings” in poetry. These strings are the invisible threads that connect the words in poems. Rhyme is the most obvious secret string, but there are others as well— such as onomatopoeia, rhythm, alliteration, same meaning in different words, color terms, repeated images and so on. Ask your kids to see if they see any secret strings in the poems.

Boomerang Effect

Poems are meant to touch us personally, even if they relate a topic or story that is unfamiliar. When reading a poem, ask what its “boomerang effect” is—how does the poem rebound from the page to your own life? Can you relate to the mood, story, circumstance, or experience? How or how not?

Friend or Foe?

Meet the author through the poem. Would you have liked him or her, do you think? What can you learn about the poet through the poem— no need to “get it right.” Guess what kind of person would write that poem. Feel free to be silly with it, too.

Wild Words

Poems are a great source of new, vivid vocabulary. In the Writing Projects section of this manual, the first project is “Wild Words.” In it, your kids will learn to keep a collection of great words! Remind them to excavate the current poems for any words they can “steal” for their own use. Talk about why the word leapt off the page and what makes it a “cool” word to collect—feels good in the mouth, has lots of hollow vowel sounds, makes me laugh, is important-sounding, is unfamiliar, pleases the ear, rhymes with my favorite word... and so on.

Reading poetry may naturally lead to writing it. The bonus project, Poetry Play on page 147, gives you a variety of forms to try with your children. You might do them in a month or try them during a teatime!



Tammy Wahl

Month 1 Wild Words

WEEK	DAY	LANGUAGE ARTS	BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE	ORAL/WRITING PROJECTS
WEEK ONE	MONDAY	Copywork Arrow		Collect Words
	TUESDAY		Poetry Teatime	Collect Words
	WEDNESDAY	Dictation		Create a word pool
	THURSDAY	Arrow Literary Element		Put a poem in your pocket
	FRIDAY	Freewrite		Play with word tickets
	NOTES			
	NEXT MONTH PREP			Begin reading chapter book
EVERY	DAY	LANGUAGE ARTS	BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE	ORAL/WRITING PROJECTS
WEEK TWO	MONDAY	Copywork Arrow		Create word tickets
	TUESDAY		Poetry Teatime	Add words; review at 3:00pm
	WEDNESDAY			Gather objects for sculptures
	THURSDAY	Copywrite own choice		Tape tickets to household items
	FRIDAY	Dictation	Nature	Freewrite answers to questions
	NOTES			
	NEXT MONTH PREP			
EVERY	DAY	LANGUAGE ARTS	BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE	ORAL/WRITING PROJECTS
WEEK THREE	MONDAY	Copywork Arrow		Select three pictures
	TUESDAY		Poetry Teatime	Picture examination
	WEDNESDAY	Dictation	Movie	Create a scrounged poem
	THURSDAY			Create a scrounged poem
	FRIDAY	Arrow Writing Activity		
	NOTES			
	NEXT MONTH PREP			
EVERY	DAY	LANGUAGE ARTS	BRAVE WRITER LIFESTYLE	ORAL/WRITING PROJECTS
WEEK FOUR	MONDAY	Copywork Arrow		
	TUESDAY		Poetry Teatime	
	WEDNESDAY	Reverse Dictation		
	THURSDAY	Copywrite own choice		Expansion project
	FRIDAY		Nature	Expansion project
	NOTES			
	NEXT MONTH PREP		Check out art books	Finish chapter book

Next Month Preview: Dust Jacket Book Review
Kids pick books to read this month.

PROJECT 1

Wild Words

DESCRIPTION

Begin this year's writing adventure in the jungle of words. They're everywhere, waiting to be plucked from pages and screens, and explored. Spend a month on an extravagant, curious, playful hunt through language as it presents itself. Every age can participate, including you, the homeschooling parent!

OBJECTIVE

The essence of writing is words. Writer's block comes from a lack of access—the words go into hiding and no scrunching of brows coaxes them forth. This month's playful approach to language helps young writers to make friends with the world of words. They will learn how to find words when they need them, and what to do once they've got them.

PROCESS

Each week will build on the previous week's work, so be sure to follow the weekly activities in order. During the first week, your kids will collect words. All words, any words. They'll sort the words according to their whims, arranging them in clusters. By week two, they will assign their words to items in the home—creating new connections and relationships between items and labels. In the third and fourth weeks, all of these delightful words will be used to create poems based on art or photography.

PROJECT

The end result of these activities will be a working lexicon of fresh, vital terms your children can read, use, and adapt for any writing they do going forward. The strategies used to find language can be used again and again when they hit the wall of writer's block for any other writing they do this year. The capstone activity is the creation of a poem drawn from the scrounged language.

Tools

- A little notebook (spiral or moleskin) to fit in a pocket or purse
- A pen or pencil
- A roll of raffle tickets (one side should be blank) or a stack of note cards cut into fourths
- Post-it Notes
- Scotch tape
- Scissors
- Magazines
- Art books or prints

WEEK 1

Collecting Words

Writers collect words. They rehearse them in the shower, notice them when they read, and test them on friends. Unfamiliar words are foisted on friends in an attempt to discover the meanings through use. Sometimes a meaning will present itself through the sound the word makes, the way it impacts a listener, and even prior associations with words similar to it.

Words are everywhere: television, songs, billboards, your computer screen, bumper stickers, books, magazines, poems, supermarket flyers, and business brochures.

This Week's Task

Read the following to your children.

Notice words in all their abundance and creative display.

Carry a mini notebook with you all week and jot down words as you discover (hear, read, see) them. Use a note-taking app on a smart phone or tablet, if you prefer.

- **You might find words in a book you're reading:** unscrupulous, punch, navigate.
- **You might find them on billboards:** Got milk?
- **You might notice them in songs:** numb, raise the roof, bleeding, fractals

Jot them all down. Keep going.

Monday–Wednesday

Collecting Words

Notice a color

fuschia

Identify a brand

Nike

Follow a letter around your house

window

Windex

wick of a candle

wicket

wicker

white walls

Worcester sauce

worried brow

Pick words from foreign languages

mon petit chou

sayonara

ciao

tortilla

oy vey

Discover opposites

twisted—straight

fiery—wet

sharp—smooth

arranged—chaotic

Create a word

figgergibit
pasturipple
closerest

Consult field guides for birds and plants

ruddy turnhouse
tufted titmouse
Carolina wren
downy woodpecker
hemlock
river birch
knock-out roses

Remind your kids that all words count

all
of
inside
the
very
because
or
but
if
which
may



Note

Take words from conversations, poems, magazines, television shows, and clothing catalogs.

Create a Wordpool

As you collect words, group them in clusters that relate to each other in some way. Liberate the words from the list in your notebook. Copy your words to “word tickets” (the blank backs of the raffle ticket roll). Put a single word on the blank side of each ticket (alternatively, create your own tickets by snipping note cards into quarters).

The following suggestions will help you to “pool” words together—to begin the process of creating connections between words and ideas.

Put them in piles, or swirls on a table, in bunches. Think about reasons they might go together: same first letter, same number of syllables, all relate to water, this bunch reminds me of my brother, action words, color words, nature words... Any grouping is valid.

Share words with your siblings, steal words from your parents—roll them around on your tongue, write them in big curly cursive or stiff straight-backed manuscript. Type them, text them, tweet them.

Put a word ticket in your pocket and look at it later in the day. Put a bowl of word tickets on the table and randomly sort through them, reading them to yourself or whoever is handy. Leave some tickets next to your bed to read before you sleep. Tuck a ticket inside a surprise place for someone else to find (underwear drawer, the dashboard of the family car, inside the medicine cabinet where the toothpaste lives...).

Add your own ideas. How else might you play with language this week?

Let the word collecting begin!



Thursday–Friday

Create a Wordpool

Grab a random group (a fistful)

yes	keys
no	carnation
fickle	sky
upside	regret
down	touch
cake	pounce
smile	tangerine
wallet	

Add more words by building from words you've already collected.

Give them a color

sky blue smile pink regrets

Give your words a sense

fickle sight tangerine touch

Add sound words

fizz, pop cockadoodledo
fiddle, crunch

Find words in a cookbook or car manual

grate	fuel pump
zest	lever
parboil	accelerate
lubricate	

Add unusual names (places or people)

Melanie	Josephine
Persephone	Pear Apple Way
Constantinople	Orchard Lane
Cucamonga	Boisseranc
Fitzwilliam	Wilma Circle
Harry	Swany
Joe	

Consult magnetic poetry (like the Shakespeare Set)

perchance	dreams
wench	manipulate
befits	drunkard
methinks	grace
delirious	melancholy
wanton	

Collect words all week. When you get stuck, think of verbs and nouns. These are your power words!

Verbs and nouns

scrunch	bench
craft	casket
needle	cell phone
perpetuate	noodle
frighten	tantrum
vase	



Of interest

“Word tickets” and the “word pool” come from poet Susan Woodridge in her enormously popular book, *Poem Crazy*.

SECOND SEMESTER

Party School Report Writing

MONTH 2

Research and Party Planning

The research you and your kids did in month one will be of special use to you now. Use your creativity (and your kids') to help you pair information from the topic with interesting party activities, foods, and decorations.

Good parties have several components

- Friends
- Invitations
- Food
- Activities
- Decorations
- Costumes (optional)
- Music

Parties based on report research will add a few components

- Posters of fun facts
- Brief biographical descriptions of relevant important persons
- A map (if relevant)

Report elements

Because this party is meant to prepare students to write a report as well, a few additional elements are worth including.

1. Create brief biographical sketches for your party guests of famous Indians (like Gandhi). Each guest will get to read about a famous person in history from that part of the world.
2. Put "fun facts" or trivia about India on poster board. Use one-liners or elaborate with a few more items: population; religions; famous foods; words or practices that are from India that most people don't know about; movies filmed in India. At the end of the party, take the posters down and hold a quiz. See who read and retained what was posted. Reward with a prize.

Process

Month 2 is about pairing the research with creative party ideas. Try some of them out to be sure they work. Let your creativity lead you!

SAMPLE TOPIC

India

Friends

Make a list of possible guests. Homeschooling families make willing and eager participants. Extended family loves being included in home education parties as well. If you invite a large crowd, ask them to contribute to the party in a meaningful way (food, dress up clothes, decorations or equipment for games). All ages can participate (including the non-homeschooling parent). However it's also fine to hold the party midday with the student's personal friends (no siblings or other parents). Talk with your kids about which situation would suit them the best.

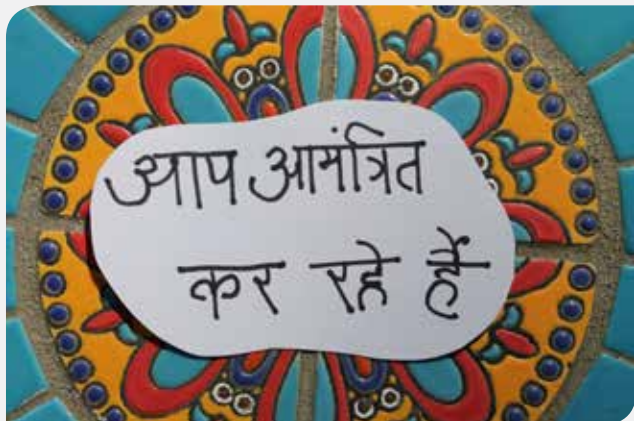
Invitations

Handmade invitations are wonderful but not necessary. Keep the topic in mind to style them accordingly.

India is reported to host more than 780 languages! Hindi and English are the two official languages. Hindi is written with the **Devanāgarī** script.

On the invitations, write: "You're invited" in both English and Hindi. Use Google translator to help you.

Create invitations that contain artwork (perhaps henna designs or images of gods or goddesses).

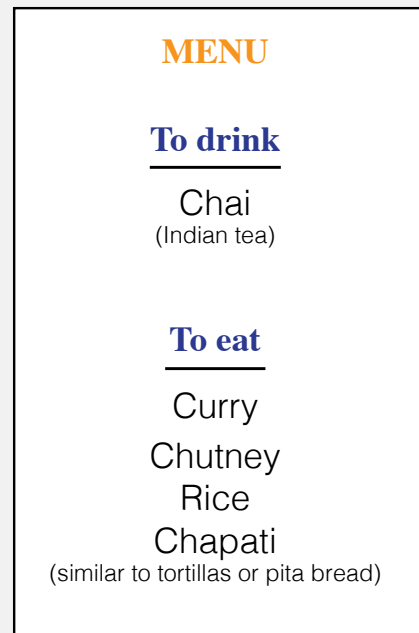


An example of an invitation for the India party

Food

A menu of authentic Indian foods is a given for a party.

Create small recipe books for the guests. Several note cards tied together in a bunch works, as well as typing the recipes into a Word doc, printing them and photocopying the pages. Staple them together and distribute.



Activities

Both authentic Indian games and activities designed to teach party guests about India are welcome.

Music

Play Indian music over speakers. Alternatively, a DVD of an Indian concert could play in the background.

PROJECT 9

Deep Dive into Literary Elements

DESCRIPTION

This batch of projects depends on the skillful use of literary elements. The next four weeks will give your kids a thrill ride in language—taking wild words and assembling them into clever phrases that maximize the Queen Literary Element of them all: Surprise!

OBJECTIVE

Facility with literary elements (also called “literary devices”) creates energy in writing. Flat-footed, trudging prose pops to life with a peppering of powerful language choices (alliteration overload of ‘p’s notwithstanding). Your kids will discover that they can create reader interest in their writing when they manipulate language to suit their aims. Literary elements function like a magic potion—transforming ordinary content into the extraordinary.

PROCESS

Each week will focus on one or two elements. The purpose of the activities is to explore them, not to lock them down. Creativity, absurdity, overuse is encouraged! It’s not possible to overdo it. Excessive application of the principles is expected! Enjoy the processes. For reluctant writers, feel free to do many of these exercises orally, or work as a group!

TOOLS

- Paper
- Wild Words from the first month
- Pens and pencils (all varieties)
- Dictionary, thesaurus, rhyming dictionary, magazines
- Scissors
- Glue stick
- Envelopes
- Note cards
- Markers

PROJECTS

A collection of literary element masterpieces will result. Your children will showcase these elements by hanging the results from a laundry line with curtain clips, or posting them to a bulletin board. When you continue with more writing in the next months, unclip the models of these elements and use them to remind your students of ways they can spruce up any piece of writing.

WEEK 2

Analogy

The ability to draw comparisons between personal experience and remote experience creates powerful writing.

Analogies are aimed at making the unfamiliar, familiar; or taking the too-familiar and making it new again.

Unfamiliar to Familiar

If writing about “snowballs” for someone who has grown up in Hawaii (never having seen or encountered snow), the writer might approximate the look and feel of a snowball by comparing it to Hawaiian shaved ice (a snowcone!). This comparison maximizes the Hawaiian’s familiar experience of shaved ice by relating it to the unknown experience of snowballs. It then creates an “aha!” experience in the reader.

Familiar to Fresh

Sports writers rely heavily on the power of analogy to make their copy pop. They write about games that most readers have seen, and about sports that most readers already know how to play. How can sports writers make the familiar more interesting? They compare the too-familiar to a fresh point of reference which helps to reinvigorate the well known.

- **For instance:** If writing about an intensely contested baseball game that went into long extra innings, ending in a grand slam, the writer might compare the length and scale of the game to sitting through the extended edition of the Lord of the Rings DVD trilogy.
- **Another example:** A writer might compare the hunt for a golf ball hit well out of play to the game “hide and seek” as the spectators scatter to look for the errant ball.

Monday-Tuesday

Process

This week, explore the world of analogies and then write your own.

The hunt

Hunt for examples of analogies in the reading you and your children do together, in advertisements, and in conversations. You might notice an analogy in the read-aloud, or find one online on a blog, or discover an analogy in a television ad.

Analogy is the tool that helps readers connect and relate to the content of the writing.

Analogies are longer than a single metaphor (direct comparison) or simile (comparison using “like” or “as”), though they do make use of one or both frequently.

Use a whiteboard to keep a running list. It might look like this:

Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re going to get until you take a bite.

PC computers are like robots. Apple computers are like friends.

The river rafting low-end package is the “brown paper bag” experience—requiring you to bring your own equipment.

The high-end package is more like a catered dining experience—the staff supplies all you need and it is of high quality.

Analogies are embedded in all kinds of writing. Paying attention is what is demanding. As a parent, you may be the one to find the analogies that you then share with your kids. That’s okay! The hunt is of the scavenger variety—digging through language in search of comparisons that make the familiar fresh or the unfamiliar, more familiar.

Faltering Ownership

Unfamiliar

- Using chopsticks
- Pressure-cooking a stew
- Playing lacrosse
- The Sanskrit alphabet
- Aunt Susan's weird laugh
- Camping in the snow
- Going through chemo therapy
- Surfing
- Speaking more than one language fluently
- Robotics
- Raising goats
- Writing gaming software
- Riding the "Tube" (London subway)
- Feeding a sourdough bread culture
- Growing organic vegetables
- Surviving a natural disaster (flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake)
- Your family reunions

Familiar

- Eating at fast food chains
- Driving long distances in traffic
- Any well-known holiday
- Playing your favorite (well-known) sport
- Not making the team
- Summer heat
- Winter cold
- Flying in an airplane
- Having a cold or the flu
- Being a sibling
- Handwriting
- Brushing your teeth
- Any novel or film that "everyone" has read or watched
- Taking selfies with a cell phone
- Playing video games
- Using social media
- Going on a picnic

As mentioned before, a rich source of excellent comparisons can be found in sports writing. Go to ESPN.com or the major sports blogs like The Bleacher Report, and read the editorials by sports writers. Identify as many comparisons as you can and ask yourself why they work (or don't!).

Wednesday

Topics

Today's task is to identify two types of topics: The unfamiliar (those experiences or items that you know well but are less well known to others), and the overly familiar (stuff that everybody knows so well, they hardly think about it).

Together with your kids, brainstorm items to go in each list. To get you started, I've provided examples of unfamiliar and familiar experiences.



What's Next?

Now that you've completed *Faltering Ownership*, you're ready to grow as a writing coach and ally in your child's life!

The best tool to transform your writing life is *The Writer's Jungle*. *The Writer's Jungle* is the centerpiece to the Brave Writer lifestyle. In it, homeschooling parents find the insight, support and tools that help them become the most effective writing coaches their children will ever have.

The missing ingredient in writing curricula isn't how to structure a paragraph (information that can be readily found on the Internet). You don't need more facts about topic sentences or how to use libraries. Grammar and spelling are not the key components in writing, either, much to the chagrin of some English teachers.

- Are you tired of the blank page blank stare syndrome (hand a child a blank page; get back a blank stare)?
- Are you worried that you aren't a good enough writer to teach writing?
- Is your child bright, curious, and verbal but seems to lose her words when she is asked to write?
- Do you wonder how to expand the ideas in the sentences your child writes without damaging your relationship?
- Has writing become a place where tears flow and fears surface?
- Is your child a prolific writer and you aren't sure how to direct him to the next level?
- Have you tried "just about everything" and feel ready to give up on writing?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then *The Writer's Jungle* is for you!

Purchase it [here](#).

If you aren't quite ready to make the big investment, get your feet wet with an issue of [The Arrow](#) (3rd – 6th grades) or [The Boomerang](#) (7th – 10th grades)—intended to help you teach the mechanics of writing naturally and painlessly!

Enjoy your journey to Brave Writing!

