

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 1: Personal Writing</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Unit 1: The Personal Narrative .....	6
Lessons 1–8 .....	6
Missing Mum .....	14
Charts 1–12 .....	16
Unit 2: Memoir .....	27
Lessons 1–9 .....	28
A Very Special Love .....	33
Charts 13–19 .....	34
<b>Section 2: Fiction</b> .....	<b>41</b>
Unit 1: Fantasy .....	42
Lessons 1–7 .....	42
Charts 20–27 .....	49
Unit 2: Realistic Fiction .....	57
Lessons 1–8 .....	58
Charts 28–30 .....	61
<b>Section 3: Informative/Persuasive Writing</b> .....	<b>65</b>
Unit 1: Informative Writing .....	66
Lessons 1–7 .....	66
Nature’s Engineers .....	71
Charts 31–35 .....	72
Unit 2: Persuasive Writing .....	77
Lessons 1–11 .....	77
Smoke Alarm .....	83
Sample Persuasive Letter .....	84
Charts 36–43 .....	85
<b>Section 4: Poetry</b> .....	<b>93</b>
Lessons 1–9 .....	94
Charts 44–47 .....	99
<b>Section 5: Pointers for Parents</b> .....	<b>103</b>
<b>Section 6: Tips for Teachers</b> .....	<b>106</b>
<b>Resources</b> .....	<b>108</b>

# *Introduction*

*Give us a minute to share with you  
why we're writing and what we're trying to do –  
share our enthusiasm and make your jobs easier, too.*

In this age of communication, writing skills are more important than ever before. Across the country, educational institutions are placing a high priority on writing – and it can be taught. *Charting the Course to Effective Writing* reveals some strategies that have been tried and found successful in classrooms, home schools and writing resource programs. This guidebook can be the basis for a year-long writing curriculum and can easily be adapted for various grade levels. It can also be used as a companion to an existing writing curriculum or as a guide for individual instruction for home schooling. Some lessons will require more than one session and some of them require little or no actual writing, but are necessary for idea development or organisation of the writing. This is a practical, user-friendly approach to the teaching of writing.

*Charting the Course to Effective Writing* emphasises pre-writing activities. These activities are absolutely necessary in order to provide students with the background to write fluently and confidently. Pre-writing activities make writing fun! Students enjoy the powerful feeling of generating ideas. Pre-writing begins with sharing and analysing examples of good writing. Then, students are given many opportunities to brainstorm, visualise and share ideas. After this extensive preparation, the actual writing comes easily.

A similar format is used throughout the book. The rationale for the repetition is that students internalise the procedure and use it effectively. Included are examples of each type of writing covered and references for other sources.

The charts included are extremely helpful in writing classes. They can be displayed in the classroom throughout the year for students to review as needed. Copies of some or all charts can also be made and kept in students' writing portfolios.

Reflection on the writing at the completion of each piece is important, so that students can recognise their progress as writers. Here the students have the opportunity to show evidence of idea development, organisation and use of language.

Writing is so satisfying to students – and to teachers and parents – when students give birth to their masterpieces. Writing empowers students and gives them confidence in themselves and their ability to communicate.

# UNIT 1

## *The Personal Narrative*

For our purposes the personal narrative is defined as the description of one incident in a person's life, and the feelings involved. A good example of a personal narrative is 'No Dad?!' in *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul*. 'Missing Mum', a personal narrative example, is included for demonstration purposes.

### Pre-writing

#### **LESSON 1: *Background***

Read with the class some examples of personal writing such as *Those Summers* by Aliko, *The Wall* by Eve Bunting, *There's A Monster Under My Bed* by James Howe, or *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. An excellent source for short personal writing selections is *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Hansen and Irene Dunlap.

In discussing the Personal Narrative with students, use 'A Good Personal Narrative' (Chart 1, page 16) to point out ways in which these criteria are met in the pieces read. Emphasise the leads and endings in the pieces read.

#### **A Good Personal Narrative:**

1. Tells about something that really happened to the author.
2. Has a lead that captures the reader's attention and gives clues about the content of the piece.
3. Describes the time of the event and the place where it occurred.
4. Has a clear beginning, middle and ending.
5. Describes what the writer and others in the story did, said and felt.

# UNIT 1

## *Fantasy*

For this book, fantasy is defined as imaginative writing that is not bound by reality. Fantasy can take many forms such as a fairy tale, a fable, a folk tale or a science fiction story.

### Pre-writing

#### **LESSON 1:** *Background*

Read with the class some short stories such as illustrated literature books, fairy tales or selections from basic readers. In discussing the short stories with the students, use 'A Good Short Story' (Chart 20, page 49) to point out ways in which these criteria are met in the stories read.

#### **A Good Short Story:**

1. Has a well-developed problem that affects the main character.
2. Describes the time and place in which the story takes place.
3. Contains events leading to the solution of the problem.
4. Develops characters by describing their actions, feelings and thoughts.
5. Uses literary devices.

# UNIT 1

## *Informative Writing*

### Pre-writing

#### **LESSON 1: *Background***

Read some pieces of informative writings on topics that focus on a purpose, such as: how-to articles, news articles, book or movie reviews, nature articles, reports etc. Some good sources are children's magazines and the Internet. In discussing the informative pieces, use '*A Good Informative Piece*' (Chart 31, page 72) to point out ways in which these criteria are met in the stories read.

#### **A Good Informative Piece:**

1. Clearly shows the author's purpose for writing.
2. Has a well-developed lead.
3. Presents factual information to support ideas.
4. Makes the reader think about the topic.
5. Has voice (comments that express the writer's feelings, thoughts or opinions) to make the piece more interesting.

#### **Capture the Moment!**

All year long when reading articles and reports, point out the ways in which the author meets the criteria for a good piece of informative writing. Identify the techniques the author uses to make the piece interesting.

## **LESSON 2: *Looking at an Informative Piece***

Choose an informative piece or use the one provided on page 71, 'Nature's Engineers', and point out how it fits the criteria for 'Looking at an Informative or Persuasive Piece' (Chart 32, page 73) using the following questions. A completed chart based on 'Nature's Engineers' is included (Chart 33, page 74).

### **Looking at an Informative or Persuasive Piece**

1. What is the purpose? What does the author want the reader to know?
2. What is the lead?
3. What factual information or explanation does the writer include to support the main ideas?
4. What thought does the writer leave with the reader at the end of the piece?
5. What comments express the writer's feelings, thoughts or opinions to make the piece more interesting?

## **LESSON 3: *Make it Interesting***

Students often tend to copy the first few paragraphs from an article in an encyclopedia. Even when students try to reword their source, many still lean heavily on the organisation or wording of the original. Some ideas to help them create more interesting and original reports (Chart 34, page 75) are:

### **Reports on Animals**

Compare two similar animals, such as lions and tigers

Write from the perspective of the animal

### **Reports on Places**

Choose one cultural aspect of the region, such as foods, art or children's games.

Compare the present-day area with what it was like a hundred years ago.