

Character Traits
Geography Terms
(Any School Subject) Terms
Science Terms
Zoo Animals

One Liners

Scripture

My Rule Notebook

Grammar Rules
Safety Rules
Spelling Rules

Your Ideas...

So...Just WHAT IS Narration?



Narration had you stumped? Not real sure what I mean when I say Narration? Let's make it easy for you! You will LOVE using Narration in your homeschool!

Narrations are simply retelling of a book, an event, or other information. Your child is probably narrating already and you may not even realize it! I didn't...

Our Baby Author BEFORE He Became Reluctant, Resistant, and Frustrated...

He was only two years old...but if you were to ask his grandparents or me, we thought he was the most brilliant child on the earth. If you took out any of his storybooks, you would find that he was able to retell every single word of the stories with perfect execution, exactly as he had heard it read so many times.

"When I Get Bigger by Mercer Mayer...When I get bigger I'll be able to do lots of things...I'll go to the corner store by myself..." He would go on and on with the exact story line, the exact characters, the exact vocabulary, and the exact tone that I would use when reading it to him. If I read the book and tried to skip a page, he immediately responded with, *"Oh, Mommy you missed: I'll have my own watch and I'll tell everyone what time it is..."* I would have to go back and read it just as I had all the times before!

At five, we tried to bring home the standard approach to teaching language arts. I, like so many moms, felt that I needed to pattern our learning after the model that had been set before me during my education. We brought out desks, chalkboard, and flags...but soon, found ourselves finishing our work quickly so we could get back to those wonderful stories!

I felt a lot of failure and frustration those first few years. Surely learning

would not have to be such a dull experience. But what was there to do? That was when I ran across the Literature-Based Approach to education. After much study, I gave up my thoughts of trying to emulate my public school education in my home. I traded it for the tried and true approaches for teaching Language Arts that had worked all throughout time to create wonderful writers. The swap was worth it! I swapped the busy fill-in-the-blanks and grammar texts for Copywork. I swapped the twaddly readers for real, living books. I swapped Dictation for spelling tests. I swapped Narration for grading and tests! I swapped boring lessons for making fun and easy homemade books!

But...What About Creative Writing???

Now you may say, "That is great, but how do you do ever get them to write their own original selections?" Your biggest question right now may be: "What about creative writing?"

Well beloved, narration is the secret! It is the link that will make all of the difference in the ease, quality, and productivity of your young writer. Talk about an easy way to create a fast and easy book. You will love this!

Check Out A Sample Narration...

Want to see an example of a narration that would make a cute book so you can get an idea? Just read the following narration that Matthew dictated to me after reading a history lesson—he was just 9-years-old:

Christopher Columbus

From *America Begins* by Alice Dalgliesh...

Narrated by Matthew Rushton, 9 years old

"When Christopher Columbus was a boy, he dreamed of sailing on the sea and being a sailor. He heard stories of Marco Polo's travels that made him convinced that he wanted to sail. Soon, he decided that the world was round and that he could sail straight to the Indies (China, now).

When he was old enough, he asked the King and Queen of Portugal and England if he could use a ship to sail to the Indies but they did not let him. So, he asked King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain if he could use a ship. They gave him three ships, the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria. He set sail for the Indies.

When he was on the journey, his men got tired of storms and all of the work. When he was just about to give up, the ship sped up and he found sticks with grapes on them floating in the sea. Then, he knew he was not far from land. That night he saw a light far off, but he did not know if it was land or not.

In the morning of October 12, 1492 when it was about 2:00, the spotter of the Pinta said "Land Ahoy!" All the sailors woke up and looked. There was land. The next morning they got in their rowboats and sailed for land. They met friendly Indians on the land. Then, with the help of the Indians, they found many birds, trees, and snakes that were not in Spain. Christopher and his men traded goods with the Indians such as glass beads, bells, shirts, and pants. The Indians traded furs, gold, and many other goods.

Soon, they had explored the whole island. They packed up and left to find India. They found more land and explored it. They lost sight of the Pinta and the Santa Maria struck a reef. They used the wood from the Santa Maria to build a fort. Some of the men had to stay behind in the fort. The rest of the men sailed back to Spain in the Nina. Then, they found the Pinta and started back together. A storm came and the two ships lost sight of each other.

The Nina reached Spain first. He showed King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella all of the treasures he had found.

Christopher Columbus set out three more times for America. He and his crew got tired of sailing and soon returned to Spain to live there."

See how cute that narration is? Don't you think it would make an adorable and informative book? Does it give you a nice feel for the material? That is because a narration is simply the retelling of the information that your student is learning. It is ORAL COMPOSITION! It is like creative writing with training wheels on!

With simple narrations, we have text that could easily be edited and proofed for a neat book or an excellent article. All that would be needed to get a book going is to gather the illustrations and get going with the final set up! Do you see how amazing this can be?

...a narration is simply the retelling of the information that your student is learning. It is ORAL COMPOSITION! It is like creative writing with training wheels on!

But! Is This Cheating? Is This REAL Writing?

All books are REALLY a nice form of narration. They are narrations (retellings) of what a person knows about a particular topic in the particular form that they choose to share that information. They are a potpourri of information gathered and compiled into a book.

Books teach what we know and love about a topic. They record what we deem important on a given topic. However, no idea is truly original. We get information everywhere we go—from real books...real life...and real people. When we share or write anything, we do so from what is inside. So, all books are really narrations of what we are learning and experiencing along the way.

Why Narration?

Narration has many great perks. It is like "training wheels" on your "writing bicycle."

Narration requires that our children use their whole mind. The children must pay very close attention to the passage or event using their whole mind to remember the specifics from the material presented. They use their entire mind to visualize the story setting, characters, and details that are described in the story. They take what is shared and use their mind to comprehend and synthesize (see the whole from the parts) the information. Then, after using all these faculties of the mind, they communicate in their own style what they have learned.

Just look at Matthew's narration above—He read the material, absorbed the information, made the information his, and shared it back articulately. This is the perfect training for a young writer. Yep! Like training wheels on a bicycle!

The elements of writing need not be difficult to learn or use. Narration makes it easy to put everything together into a great product. The children are able to learn to create stories without the toil of making one up because they already have the characters, plot, vocabulary, and story line. All that they must do is articulate the story. What is neat about Narration is that the greatest writers and thinkers are actually tutoring your children! They gently teach the art of composition through their great books. The children pick up their own style naturally through years of sitting at the feet of their favorite writers. Their writing skills become more advanced quicker because they have had non-threatening experience with composition. Plus, they find writing to be easy, natural, and fun!

Wondering How To Do It???

Got ya curious? Wondering just how to use the narration? Here are the basics...

- ⇒ Read a book.
- ⇒ Let your child retell the story to you.

- ⇒ Write down the story as a rough draft on paper to keep in a notebook.
- ⇒ Re-copy the narration, allowing the student to take a look at a corrected "rough draft" of their story (narration).
- ⇒ Go over the corrected narration with your child to "proofread" the draft.
- ⇒ Correct all errors, set up and prepare for your book.
- ⇒ Follow the other directions for creating your own homemade books.

It is just that easy! So, why not dig in???

Have fun!

Soooo, What If????



- As we wrap up this book, I am sure that there are those of you who would JUST like to ask a little question. Got ya?? Well, that is what this chapter is
- for. I have collected those questions by email and from our workshops (yes, in a notebook! ☺) and compiled them into this "written" question and answer
- session. I hope this helps any of you needing a bit of help for your specific problem. Here goes...

What If My Child HATES This???

- As we begin ANYTHING new, I believe that there is a natural resistance. I must say that I personally do not DO change well. I would rather do anything other than experience the trauma of something new!
- Our children are so much like us. There is a comfort in doing things the same old way. Plus, often as we are working out the details ourselves, we tend to communicate our own insecurity to them by really not knowing how things are going to work out...whether they WILL work.
- My advice is to GIVE IT TIME. Hebrews 12: 11 says..."For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; BUT AFTERWARDS it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness—in conformity to God's will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God]." (Amplified Version)
- The beginning of ANY discipline is sooo hard. In fact, the best way to know just how difficult notebooking, copywork, dictation or any of the disciplines shared in this book really are is to try it yourself. In fact, in my workshops, this is where I ask THE PARENTS to pull out a piece of paper. Why not join me now yourself? Pull out a piece of paper. Let's try a simple copywork lesson. Go

back through this book, choose a neat quote or a Scripture passage that YOU like. This will be your copywork. Oh...why not just be sure to make it a bit longer than just a neat quote. What about a whole chapter from your favorite Bible passage?

Got it? Great! Now...sit down for a bit...copy the passage...WITH YOUR WEAK HAND. Yep! You read right! If you primarily write with your right hand, use that left hand. If you are left-handed, then your partner in this exercise is your right hand!

No whining, beloved! No dawdling. I KNOW this is tough. Let's write it neatly. Do your very best! ☺

How did it go? How does it look? Your hand a bit achy? Did it get tough to pay attention? Did you spell everything correctly? Did you mess up any spacing? Do you see ALL that it takes to get that passage on paper?

Feel any pity for your little writer? Writing is TOUGH work! Just HAND writing is tough work. I am not even talking about just the communication part of it—there are sooo many skills being used just in a simple copywork lesson: attention, spelling, copying from one page to another without errors, copying neatly, sticking to the work, proofreading, and, last but probably the hardest, writing without getting too tired physically.

I grieve when I hear about the long lessons that so many little writers are having to do each day. First, *bad habits are being developed* as any normal child will hurry through the work just to get finished or work without a heart for the work. Second, most are *not learning how to pour their hearts out on paper*. That only comes as they read, copy great models, and develop a passion for topics that can only be given from the challenge of a great writer PASSIONATE about their own writing.

Soooo, look at the process of writing. Get to know what should be REALLY expected from children, not from textbooks, but from *the process of real writers*. Begin by assigning small, reasonable amounts of Copywork that will enable them to be successful each day. Encourage interests. Give interests TIME to grow within the child. Annnd finally, MODEL before your children a

- lifestyle where YOU are learning and keeping notebooks of your own. When you get a little impatient, pull out a piece of paper...grab a neat quote...and exercise that unused hand a bit! It won't be long until your most reluctant writer will bear fruit that will be worth the wait!

"My Child Prefers Workbooks!"

- If your child LOVES those workbooks, your child is destined to be the perfect "Binder Kid!" Usually what the child REALLY prefers is wrapped up in several things that workbooks offer...

- ⇒ They know what to expect each day.
- ⇒ They know how much MUST be done to complete the day's lessons.
- ⇒ They sense completion as they finish the assigned amount each day.

- Sooo, how does Notebooking compare? I believe that Notebooking is perfect for these students!

- ⇒ They become accustomed to what is expected as they develop the daily discipline.
- ⇒ They LOVE finishing their work, especially since it makes sense to them and has real purpose.
- ⇒ The notebooks are a prize as they begin to fill up with completed work, that they actually LOVE!

- So, what do you do with this workbook enthusiast?

- If your child is hooked on workbooks, begin to transition in an area or subject that they are less than enthusiastic about the work being assigned in workbooks. **Require a specific amount each and every day.** DO NOT add to that amount to "make up" for any missed days (I KNOW the temptation on those days that work IS going great! Don't do it!). Bit-by-bit...step-by-step. Here-a-little...there-a-little. Make it consistent. Make it a daily "thing" to do early in your morning schedule. Let them know that if they complete their daily Copywork, that they are DONE for the day!

- Also, **appeal to their interests.** NOW...at first, they probably won't have any

interests. That is OK, get them started on copying Scripture or poetry or mottoes. Be prepared for a few complaints, Notebooking is hard work that requires THINKING and a RELATIONSHIP, unlike workbooks. It won't be long until your child digs into some topic that may very well be his or her life calling! What a treasure!

HELP! They Don't Know What to Put In It!

Oh, I pray that this book will help you to help them. See this process as a time of discipleship. Get them started. Give them access to all of the resources that they will need to work on their notebooks. Of course, DO transfer this process QUICKLY to them so they do not depend on you to plan for them. This transfer begins at the end of the first lesson of Copywork as they put their work away THEMSELVES!

You may want to write out some models for them to copy from. Also, begin your search for great resources that can be kept on hand for them to use. See our resource section for some of our favorites.

Give them time to get intimate with a subject they love. Encourage them to use THOSE gems in their notebooks. Then, turn them loose!

Where On Earth Do We Keep These Notebooks???

Remember that test at the beginning? Now is your time to go back and see if you can be counted in the growing number of Binder Queens??? If so, then you will also now develop a constant need for BOOKSHELVES! ☺ My husband has determined that no matter HOW many he builds, I am NEVER satisfied! True, true, guilty as charged!

Now, let's get down to the nitty-gritty...can you think of a better thing to take up room in your home? Yes, I have to dust shelves and shelves of old beloved books and notebooks...but, on those days that I feel life to be just a bit too unfair since ALL of the world's dust collects on my most treasured possessions, all I have to do is sit down with ONE of those notebooks to be filled to overflowing with sweet memories and a gentle reminder of how much they are really learning and growing at all times.

Of course, after all of these years, with our whole family notebooking, we really do not have 3-ring notebooks overtaking our home! ☺ Do not be afraid. What we do have are treasures that we would gladly make even more space for if we needed to! ☺ Soooo, do not let those fears keep you from using one of the most life-changing tools in your homeschool.

Keep those precious notebooks on your bookshelves so the children have free access to their work. We also love to use milk crates. They are the perfect size for 3-ring binders, plus they are easy to carry on the road with us.

Whatever you do, KEEP those notebooks! Several years ago, God gently impressed upon me the value of each moment with my children. He spoke to my heart that *if what we were doing was not important enough to KEEP, then it was not worthy of the TIME my children would spend doing it*. So, take a look. Evaluate. Is this worth keeping? Then, is it worth my child's time doing it? All else will fall into place, even the place to keep all those treasures!

How Much Is Enough???

Is there a little alarm in all of us that sounds on a regular basis to torture us with the thought that we MAY NOT do enough with our little blessings??? That we MIGHT mess up??? My dear friend, I hear that alarm too. Let me push snooze by giving the answer!

We are not looking for quantity. With Notebooking the focus shifts away from quantity, requirements to an imaginary authority, or subjects...and focuses onto a greater call—toward excellence. The goal is excellence. Excellence in quality. Excellence in character. With Notebooking, less is best here! We want their very best work. We want to instill much, much more than just HOW TO WRITE. We want for our children to write for God's glory. To shake our culture. To help change lives! To be history makers!

They will not always be where they are. Yes. Your children's selection will grow in length as they grow in maturity, stamina, and endurance. Want to know how to test for the amount JUST right for your child?? Here are a few considerations that should really help you...

⇒ **Too Messy?** Probably hurrying through their lessons or the habits of excellence are not developed. Shorten the amount and require neatness. *Less is best* at the beginning to ensure that good habits are being developed. Once the habits of excellence and success are developed, they will be on the right track toward becoming great writers. IF they continue to be messy, require them to write over. DO stress that if they do it nicely the first time, this is ALL they will have to do!

Less is best
at the
beginning to
ensure that
good habits
are being
developed.

⇒ **Dawdling**...More than likely this is another bad habit. Shorten their work and require completion in 10-15 minutes. Assure them that if they get finished, this is ALL they have to do AND stick to that commitment. Do not require writing in different subjects. Limit their written work to Copywork and possibly, Math (that CAN be oral with a very reluctant writer.)

⇒ **Overwhelmed**...Slooooooow back down for them. Let them develop a habit of success. Encourage them lots and lots!

⇒ **Bored**...Look at their interests. If you do not know what their interests are, then get to know your child better. Choose selections that SHOULD appeal to their interests. Make them short and easy to finish each day. Don't overdo! Then, give them PLENTY of free time to develop deeper interests.

⇒ **Finishes too quickly—"slapping" it down just to get finished**...Increase the amount assigned JUST enough to challenge them and require more of their focus and attention to details.

⇒ **HATES writing**...Develop the daily discipline bit-by-bit! Simplify ALL lessons. Only require writing in Copywork...do the rest orally. Start with small lessons that guarantee success. If you can, let them choose their own Copywork based on their interests. Keep their lessons dependable and predictable. Let their notebooks truly reflect THEIR interests and personality, NOT what YOU want for them to be or to be interested in! Be sure they understand what they are doing, why, and how?? Give them time to get accustomed to the daily discipline and you will see real,

lasting change.

Keep in mind what we are working toward—a child who LOVES writing for life and CHOOSES to keep on learning all of his life!

One of my most recent treats came to me after my son graduated from being homeschooled 13 years. The week after his graduation, he wrote more articles than he had all year long. He is continuing that pace. Writing is a part of his life. It is something that he can do to minister for the Lord for the rest of his life. Sound unrealistic? It is not! We are nothing special! These techniques work for everyone! Your child may not write for publication, but every child can learn to enjoy writing. Every student can begin a lifestyle of learning that continues for life. **YOU CAN GET THERE TOO!** The best way to get to the goal is to instill disciplines that make writing and learning easy, natural, and part of a real lifestyle. The best place to learn that is to look at how professional writers keep that passion for writing...

- ⇒ Writing is a daily discipline...a little each and every day!
- ⇒ Projects are swapped back and forth to keep them fresh and interesting.
- ⇒ Writers keep journals with quotes, ideas, brainstorming, and collected information.
- ⇒ Writers READ voraciously!
- ⇒ Writers write on topics of interest and delights!
- ⇒ Writers pursue areas of interest instead of subjects or required areas of study!
- ⇒ Writers engulf themselves in their topic until it is done! Takes TIME!
- ⇒ Writers write as they learn many topics...in fact, their writing often teaches the subject to them more in depth than simple acquaintance with the topic.

I want to challenge you to step out to a different way to teach Language Arts. Develop the disciplines. Don't worry about amounts. Encourage your little writer. No comparisons. No criticism. Just love and encouragement. Then, watch the fruit!

**But...Is This REAL Writing??? Will This Count?
Will This Prepare My Child Properly??**

Yes! Actually this IS real writing. We are sooo accustomed to false, artificial writing. This is a REAL model of writing.

Don't mistake fun for ineffective...writing IS fun. Ask any writer what they CHOOSE to do when they get a minute of free time (Pick me! Pick me! I KNOW the answer! WRITE! Give me a big cup of tea...a week ALL to myself...and *I* choose to WRITE! ☺) Don't mistake interest for "wrong." Ask a writer WHAT they write on. Ask them what they could never imagine writing about. Professional writers have specific areas of interest that they pursue wholeheartedly. Want your young writers to write with passion? Find their interests! Let that be their first topics!

Yes, it is OK, in fact advisable, to tailor your child's education to their interests, gifts, bents, talents, and abilities. Oh, my dear friend, look at your child. Don't sacrifice your child on the altar of tradition that you led you to homeschool. Those same "traditions" are rarely turning out great authors. Trade those workbooks and textbooks written by committees for great literature that is awaiting your children to teach those skills of writing naturally and easily.

Does this prepare for the future?? Of course! If the Lord has His Will in the life of your child, your child will be fulfilling a calling that is meant to offer delight and true satisfaction. Notebooking moves your child toward that calling bit-by-bit. God created us so we could experience relationship. Oh, Notebooking encourages that relationship with God, others, and life! God created us so we could enjoy all of the little treasures He has made for us in this world. Oh, this discipline causes us to stop and enjoy! What about that future? It is truly empty with all of the facts in the world stuffed in our heads to the detriment of the joy, contentment, peace, and delight that God has in store for those that just ask.

Sooo, for true preparation for a future that God wants, focus on those intimacies and interests that will fill up the heart, soul, and mind of your children. Let them dig into those interests...you never know which one might be

THEIR life calling! Let them learn early how to learn anything they would like to know about. You won't miss anything. In fact, your children will really dig out more than you could dream!

How DO I Get Started TODAY???

I pray that you are ready to begin if you are not already Notebooking! Begin first with Copywork. That is the BEGINNING whether you have a pre-schooler or a high schooler. If they are not choosing to write for a hobby OR if they are writer wanting to be a better writer, this is the most important discipline. The only way they could be too advanced for this is if they are beyond the abilities of God, our BINDER KING Who STILL keeps Copybooks! ☺

Let them begin copying Scripture, poetry, neat quotes. Let them collect nature and label. Let them draw. Let them begin organizing their notebooks (design cover, keep pages in order, even scrapbook...). Keep in mind that these may seem EASY to you, but these techniques teach the SKILLS of writing. Sooo, take it easy!

As they get accustomed to organizing their notebooks, slowly transfer the WHOLE process to them. The goal is for your child to take off pursuing interests on their own, setting their own pace, and to continue this lifestyle of learning the rest of their life!

So, what is left for you to do? What does a parent do when they take off? Encourage, encourage, encourage, and then encourage some more! Encourage them to keep digging deeper. Exhort them to broaden studies. Equip them to continue learning their whole life! Then, watch the fruit!

"We write this to make our joy complete."

1 John 1: 4...

Slow and Steady! Understanding the Process of Learning...



Frustrated with homeschooling? Frustrated with your young writer? Frustrated with teaching your child to write? Maybe you are not frustrated, but you have just read all of this and yet you are wondering about YOUR CHILD. You just wonder if—wondering if they are doing ENOUGH? Wondering if they are on track? Wondering if you can truly trust copywork...notebooking...narration... and creating books to train your young writer? Oh beloved friend, this may very well be one of the most important chapters that you will ever read. God has established a specific way in which our children learn. His way WORKS! His way is truly easy! His way does not change! His way will make ALL of the difference in the world in your homeschool!

One of the most liberating things that we can do as homeschool parents is get to know and understand what God's way of homeschooling and teaching writing looks like and how it works. The benefits are beyond words—but, that is just GOD! Once we truly understand the process of learning, we can relax and enjoy teaching our children. We can find fun ways to teach difficult concepts. We can slow down to enjoy each and every step along the writing journey, knowing that they WILL get there! So, ready to dig in? What do we need to remember about the process of writing?

Keep in Mind...

⇒ **Keep in mind that the process of writing is bit-by-bit!** Scripture calls it "precept-upon-precept... line-upon-line... here-a-little... there-a-little." The process of writing takes TIME. It does not happen in a day... week... month...year... or even a couple of years. Rather, it is a life-long process. A process that happens bit-by-bit! Enjoy each step. Always remember that they WILL get it! It is just bit-by-bit!

WHERE IT COUNTS, we must slow down and enjoy the process along the way! Then, writing will become easy and fun!

⇒ **Remember that the process of writing is SLOW.** We live in a culture that wants everything fast, instant, and immediate. Think of the rat race that we live in. *Everything is FAST*—One hour print (actually now we are moving to digital cameras for even FASTER access to pictures)...Ten minute oil changes (and let it take 11 minutes!)... microwave meals. Just think about it. Even our appliances are all geared for a FAST pace—microwaves... dishwashers...slow cookers (NOW don't be fooled by the name! We use these as we are running out the door so our healthy meals are ready to serve at the end of the day.)...bread machines...computers. AND... Think about COMPUTERS—laptops...internet (instant connections!)... wireless (for instant access—anywhere)...email (to instantly communicate)...E-zines (instantly receive each issue)...auto-responders (to instantly KNOW that our orders and correspondence went through) ... shopping carts (to instantly order)...auto-processing of orders/ credit cards (to know instantly that your order is in and on its way)...E-books (to instantly receive our products so we don't have to wait for the dreaded USPO to deliver)...Instant Messenger (for those that find that email is too slow). Even when we are IN person, well, we aren't—we have drive-thru's for everything—food...

cleaners...pharmacies...oil changes...and...please gasp with me—FUNERAL HOMES! We are on a fast track. No wonder we have such a difficult time waiting for our children to learn. No wonder we struggle as we wait for the "Process of Learning" to bring fruit! Sure. We can use these amazing resources above. But, we must always remember that WHERE IT COUNTS, we must slow down and enjoy the process along the way! Then, writing will become easy and fun!

⇒ **Don't forget that God will faithfully lead you each step of the way.** God will never, ever leave you alone in this journey. He is there RIGHT NOW! As I look back over the last 14 years of homeschooling, I can see that God has faithfully led me each step of the way. He has gently shown me exactly what was necessary to teach my children naturally all along our journey. He will do the same for you! His only requirement is that we hear and obey Him each step of the way. Then, it all is amazing!

⇒ **Know that the process of writing is worth the wait!** Wait patiently for the fruit. It is SO worth it! Sure it takes time, but the fruit is priceless!

What about your young writer? Are you expecting an immediate product? Are you merely reaching for the immediate product that "schools" expect? Regardless of the child's interests or delights or even the affinities of their heart, schools want an immediate product. In fact, they want an immediate product regardless of the costs, frustrations, or ramifications. This approach destroys the love of writing! Much too often, it also destroys the student along the way! I am heartbroken that "school" takes away the natural writer in all of us. I believe that we all have that gift deep within, but "school" and its inferior writing methods, as it is, pushes it away. Even "school" at home! Rather, than this, why not reach for real fruit! Why not wait out the whole process and reach for the best? It is worth it!

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So...WHAT Does the Process Look Like? Where is MY Child?

We did not begin to teach writing to our children by assigning them to write essays or papers on topics. The first lessons in writing began with the first little reading times when they were babies! Today, both of our children have written books for years and continue to write professionally. How do you get there?

First, begin by *reading to them* as infants (or as soon as possible—it is never too late!). Reading widely and regularly is the foundation of all great writers. If there is one thing to do (and do A LOT!) regardless of your teaching style or methods, reading is that ONE THING! Begin with simple picture books and your Bible. As they grow older, make reading a part of your daily life. The effects are immeasurable!

As they begin to show readiness for handwriting, buy them notebooks and supplies to begin *making notebooks and homemade books*. Beginning to keep copywork and other information in their very own notebooks trains the young student in skills that are necessary to write (and learn) for life. By making materials available for them to access freely, children are easily addicted to writing.

My son authored his first book completely on his own at only 11 years old—

AND during Christmas break! It began years ago as he developed an interest in our United States Military. As matter of fact, it took 5 years of reading, studying, asking questions of those in the military, watching video footage of the wars, and making the topic "his own" before my son's delight flowed into a product of his own. Do not expect your second grader to have a similar product—**IT TAKES YEARS!**

As matter of fact, it took 5 years of reading, studying, asking questions of those in the military, watching video footage of the wars, and making the topic "his own" before my son's delight flowed into a product of his own.

It not only takes years, but it takes *reading and studying* so widely that they see a hole that *only they can fill!* It takes years of collecting information...asking questions that demand that they seek for answers...and digging deeper than is possible with just mere nodding acquaintances that are common to most curriculum or approaches.

My son came to me that year at Christmas and said, "Mom, have you ever noticed (the answer is NO if you are wondering as you read this!) that there is not one book that has a complete, chronological history of the Marines...I find bits here and there... someone needs to write a book with all of it in it...I guess that it will just have to be me!"

YES! I about fell out! It was just a dream that I had once let cross my mind. Which mother does not DREAM of their child taking initiative to write a book of their very own? I never dreamed that he would actually SAY it, much less MEAN it!

Did you notice? He began that book during his Christmas Break. Yes, you read correctly! **He had time off from regular duties and extra time on his hands.** His activity of choice was to write a book. Have you read about our struggles??? Well, it was more an aversion to the pencil! Matthew detested his school lessons. Lessons would drag on hours for lessons which could be finished easily in just 5-10 minutes. His work was half-hearted... messy... careless... and we were both in tears! Flash forward...this same child was busily writing a book during his Christmas vacation. He even excitedly told me that he thought that he had a gift in writing!

What caused the transition? I believe it was seeking for GOD'S process of

learning. Slowing down, just to go the pace of my child. Getting to know him—his strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and interests. Allowing him to get to KNOW his topic, while letting his writing just flow from the abundance!

Instead of bringing school home, we have opted to bring a lifestyle of learning into our home. We have allowed the children the time needed to develop interests that are resulting into a delight that simply **MUST** pour out through their pens. We are equipping them through our daily disciplines with the skills bit-by-bit that they will need to pour out those delights whether on paper or in their play or as they share with others.

So, What About You?

So...where are you today? Frustrated? Wondering if they are doing ENOUGH? Wondering if they are on track? God has established a specific way in which our children learn. His way **WORKS!** His way is truly easy. His way does not change. My challenge is for you to just try things **HIS WAY!** Allow all the time that is necessary for your children to develop real interests. Allow time for them to learn bit-by-bit. Give all the time that is necessary for the process of learning to yield its fruit—a writer who delights in writing for *God's Glory!* You will love what God will do through your young writer!

Some Quotes From Long Ago About Notebooking...



Notebooking is NOT a new idea. It goes back to the very beginning of time. As we have devoured neat books from long ago, one of my "secret" treats along the way has been finding neat references to notebooking tucked within the pages. It is THERE! Just go back to those old favorites!

Remember the Elsie Dinsmore books? Remember how frustrated Elsie got because Arthur blotted her "copybook" and got her in trouble? Have you been reading the books by Wilson Rawls and slipped up on the how he mentioned notebooking as a "way of life" in his books? What about the preface of *The Imitation of Christ* as we find that Sir Thomas e'Kempis copied the Bible at least 4 times during his life. Oh, and speaking of the Bible...its mere preservation through the years depended upon copywork. That is obvious, but it was also an integral part of the life of the greatest men and women throughout time. In fact, so much so, that God commanded the kings of His people to keep a copy of the Word with them that HAND-COPIED into a book that could go with them all of the days of their lives. If that is not cute enough...even God keeps a note-book—His *Book of Remembrance*. ☺ Just dig up the references in the Bible—you will find that this discipline goes back...way back!

Hooked? Want to begin YOUR journey finding gems from long ago? Why not begin with a few fun quotes that I have enjoyed. Not only are they really neat, but they will also help you to make notebooking easy within your home. Here goes:

William Thayer, *Gaining Favor With God and Man*

"He was not more than twelve or thirteen years of age, when he read with pen in hand, and note-book in which he jotted down references to particular facts and statements, and thoughts inspired by the book read. He continued this practice through life. In his mature life, he wrote to a young lady as follows:--'I

would advise you to read with pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or that may be useful; for this will be the best method of imprinting such particular on your memory, where they will be ready, either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or, at least, to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of curiosity; and, as many of the terms of science are such as you cannot have met with in your common reading, and may, therefore, be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you meet with a word you do not comprehend the precise meaning of.' The foregoing advice was given one hundred and fifty years ago (NOW 250!), but it is just as good counsel for readers to-day as it was then. Indeed, change of circumstances, which we have partially considered, adds force and value to the advice. It is the only way of reading to the best advantage, for it fixes the attention, assists method, strengthens purpose, and charges memory with its sacred trust."

Reverend Joseph Cook

"I have learned to rely on the margins of the books that I read as being themselves my best note-books. Of course, I am speaking now only of the volumes which are my own property. These I am, perhaps, scandalously free in marking, and so every ordinary volume that I have in my library becomes a note-book. Let young men—and, we would add, young ladies, too—be taught to keep commonplace books, and especially to converse concerning what they read."

William Thayer, *Gaining Favor With God and Man* describes Rev. Cook "This counsel of Mr. Cook should have some great weight, coming, as it does, from one of the most remarkable men of our age, or any age...He was a great reader...He read science, literature, history, biography, and even metaphysics, in his boyhood. In academy and college, he kept up his habit of systematic reading. The thorough manner which he read made him master of every subject. Even now, reading is scarcely second to what is called study in his method of public instruction. He is a lecturer, known the world over. But for reading, he would not have dreamed his present field of labor, and, but for it, he would not continue now to be a public instructor."

William Thayer, *Gaining Favor With God and Man*

"The advantage of note-books over marginal references is so great that the

latter can scarcely be recommended to young people who own few of the books they read. But the excellent habit of reading critically, with pen, or pencil and note-book in hand, should be insisted upon everywhere; for it is good for both young and old, male and female, learned and unlearned—all classes who read."

Tips For The Stressed Out Mom!



Ok! Ready to give it a try...but one problem? You are not quite sure that this will really work? Fears tormenting you? Uncertain about the results? Things just not moving along fast enough? Well, this is YOUR chapter! Let me share a few tips that may just be the very thing to help you. Ready? Here goes...

- ♥ **Be patient!** Isn't this the hardest part? What if you KNEW that they would get it? What if you knew that years from now you would look back over beautiful notebooks full of what your children REALLY learned through the years? Would everything just be easier? Have you looked at all of the samples in this book and on our CD? What if I told you that every single notebook and every single page that you see FINISHED now was created by a child who was once at a point of frustration? What if I took you back in time to the moment that it was completely exhausting? Would you believe that you too are going to have an incredible product? Know that this is SO worth the time of struggle! Know that you WILL get there! Think of the incredible treasure that is coming! Excited? Feel more patient?
- ♥ **Relax to a comfortable pace!** This is not a race! A notebook is not worth more because it is completed at record pace. Nor is a notebook worth less because of its pace. Each and every notebook has a story. Each one develops in its own timing. We have gorgeous notebooks that have been built over the years. I treasure each and every one of them for what they became. Do the same with those projects underway in your home. Relax. Enjoy the journey. Enjoy making memories—good ones! Keep a good, relaxed, comfortable pace. No rushing. No pressing. No driving. Relax and enjoy!
- ♥ **Make sure that your student corrects HIS OWN work.** Writing is SO personal. Original, creative writing comes from the heart. When a

Less is Best

parent comes into the project with a red pen, something happens to the young writer. They freeze up. Their little hearts break. Rather than developing this atmosphere in your lessons, teach your children young how to proofread and correct their own work. Let daily lessons be a training ground to give your child a "seeing eye." Copywork is great because it is not confrontational. It is not personal. The children are copying the exact words, the exact phrases, the exact punctuation, and even the exact set-up that is "modeled" before them. Two things will happen. First, your young writer will learn a priceless skill that will train their "seeing eye." Their work will never be the same! Secondly, you will find them more open to your input. It won't be as harsh on their hearts. Give it a try. I think that you will see the benefits immediately!

♥ **Less is better than stress!** Always remember: It is better to have LESS quality than to have stress in the process! Think back. Do you remember the frustrations from your school years? What were you writing? Did it even matter? What was the deal? Well, let's make it easier for you. Stress is the number one culprit behind those "Writing WHOAS" that students experience. In fact, stress is the number one culprit behind "learning WHOAS." Studies show that when students (or even their parents!) are stressed, they immediately shut-down. Learning is halted to an abrupt stop. Creativity is impossible under stress. So, what have we learned in our homeschool? Well, first thing is that "less is best!" Less in quantity with excellence moves forward! It instills a habit of excellence! This is where we want to go! Secondly, less in quality is better than a parent taking over and doing it for the student. Allow for their work to look like a "child's book." The little things will not matter when they are older. I worked so hard to be sure that our writing was "straight" and not ever "smudged." Now, I treasure little things that remind me that they WERE little and they HAVE grown up! Those little things are sweet treasures. Truly less is better than stress!

♥ **Remember, this IS a process!** Scripture calls it "precept-upon-precept... line-upon-line... here-a-little... there-a-little." The process of writing takes TIME. It does not happen in a day... week... month...

year... or even a couple of years. Rather, it is a life-long process. A process that happens bit-by-bit! Enjoy each step. Always remember that they WILL get it! It is just bit-by-bit!

Resources We Think You Will LOVE!!



Bear buddies read together

Psalm 90:17 (Amplified)

"And let the beauty and delightfulness and favor of the Lord our God be upon us; confirm and establish the work of our hands—yes, the work of our hands, confirm and establish it."