



Junior High Writing
Handbook
Grades 6-8
4th Edition

Cornerstone Christian Academy
Parent/Student Writing Handbook Table of Contents
Grades 6-8

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Writing Curriculum Overview

The purpose of this curriculum is to align our teaching standards, expectations, and assessments of writing from K-12th. This type of alignment is instrumental in creating solid, well-rounded, complete writers. Following an organized and consistent method for teaching writing has three main purposes. The first is to create a unified approach to writing, so all grade levels are working toward the same goals/outcomes. No more guessing if previous grade levels have done a persuasive paper, it's clear that it is introduced in 4th, while further, more challenging dimensions are added subsequently in middle school and high school. It is not necessary to introduce or teach each paper type every year. This overview not only simplifies teaching practices but also provides direction. The second purpose of unifying the approach to writing in grades K-12 is to eliminate student frustration. Anytime curriculum is viewed in isolation from year to year, students suffer most. Utilizing common paper outlines, writing guidelines, and rubrics in each grade level greatly simplifies the writing process. Students don't have to learn new practices each year. Instead, they may simply progress from grade to grade, building upon what was previously taught. The third reason for unifying our approach to writing is to have a record of student progression over the years. This issue will be discussed further in the portfolio and rubric sections.

Portfolio Explanation

The following page is a graphic organizer specifying the writing expectations at Cornerstone Christian Academy for grades 6-8. These outcomes represent what papers are placed into each student's portfolio at all grade levels. It, by no means, limits teachers from having other writing assignments throughout the year. In fact, this is encouraged in the form of journal and reflective writing, which is far less formal. The more students write, the more comfortable and experienced they become with the task. Collecting the same samples from all students provides consistency in measuring student growth and progress.

Each student has an individual portfolio, which is used to accumulate samples throughout the each students' education. Ideally, portfolios are meant to accomplish a few different things: monitor and track individual student progress, clearly communicate that growth to students, parents, teachers and administrators, and serve as a means with which to evaluate the overall curriculum design and implementation. In other words, viewing various grade level samples of student work show how well students are mastering and applying various writing or grammatical technique. For example, the best way to judge how well figurative language is being taught is to examine its representation and usage in student papers.

English teachers keep all student portfolios for the year. The paper and the rubric used for assessment are entered in the portfolio. Once the year is complete, the portfolios follow the students to the next grade level. Portfolios are used to communicate progress to parents.

Cornerstone Christian Academy
Portfolio Writing Samples
Grades 6-8

Paper Types and Number of Samples per Year
Collected for the Writing Portfolio

Grade	Opinion All English Papers	Informative/ Research	Narrative	Biblical Analysis	Informal Writing
6th	1 Literature Critique 1 Persuasive 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History	1 regular narrative 1 Bible narrative	1 (in English)	2-3 per semester (science, history, English, math)
7th	1 Literature Critique 1 Persuasive 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History	1 regular narrative 1 Bible narrative	1 (in English)	2-3 per semester (science, history, English, math)
8th	1 Literature Critique 1 Persuasive 1 Agree/Disagree	2 Science 2 History	1 regular narrative 1 Bible narrative	1 (in English)	2-3 per semester (science, history, English, math)

All papers should be roughly 2-3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. All of these papers should be typed and submitted to the portfolio with a rubric attached. Please see Definition of Paper Types, Writing Process, and Story Outlines (in Writing Curriculum Handbook) and Cornerstone Christian Academy Literacy Standards (by grade level) for clarification of guidelines on each paper type.

Writing Process

This is the model to structure formal paper-writing. The teacher will guide students through this process. Students should only be on their own with this process when they are very familiar with the particular paper type.

Writing Process:

1. “Power write” - Start with an informal ‘power write’. Give students a broad topic that all are familiar with, like winter. Set a timer for 2-3 minutes. Students are to use this time to write down as many words that ‘pop’ into their mind. It’s a good idea to review the different parts of speech briefly before doing this, like adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, etc. For older grades, you may even remind them of the most recent figurative language you’ve discussed, like similes, for example. This is free-writing time. Some students jot down series of words, while some choose to start forming sentences or mini stories. Anything is acceptable. The purpose is to start the free flow of ideas. This can also be a journal writing activity. A brief journal entry or question about a previous day’s lesson are also good ideas for ‘Power Write’.
2. Introduce IEW Strategy – See the Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) writing techniques to see what is expected at each grade level. These are the same strategies that teachers are looking for while assessing papers. All of the techniques/strategies are taught and reviewed according to the chart. Reviewing these writing skills ensures that students know how they are assessed with each paper. These can be found on pages 26 and 27 of the writing packet.
3. Complete the Outline – Good writing starts with an organized outline. Depending on how familiar students are with the particular type of writing, this may be teacher-led, partner work, or done individually. No matter what stage a writer is at, the teacher refreshes students on outlines and how to complete them. Please see the explanation on the purpose of outlines/story maps and how to use them.
4. Write the first draft - Students are ready to create a first draft using the story map/outline. Students are reminded that each Roman Numeral on the outline represents one paragraph. Similarly, each box on a story map represents one paragraph. Students generate papers

using a computer. Remind students again of IEW strategies. Students should use the rubric to guide in the paper-writing process.

5. Edit - Once the first draft is complete, it is time to edit. Students need to be sure that they have incorporated the proper IEW techniques. Students can print out a hard copy and self-edit or edit with parent. Both are recommended.
6. Final paper - Once the paper has been edited, print out the final draft for submission.

Description of Paper Types

Cornerstone Christian Academy

Cornerstone Christian Academy strives to maintain a comprehensive approach to writing, beginning at Kindergarten. Our standards surpass the Common Core State Standards for paper types; the following is a brief description of the basic paper types taught at Cornerstone. Writing procedures are consistent from elementary to secondary. The primary difference includes the complexity of the topic and the expanded development of said topic: at the secondary level, the students are introduced to supporting paper topics with primary source quotations and eventually integrating secondary sources. We believe that this consistency produces confident and capable writers across many content areas.

Narrative- tells a story. Students must have the elements of plot present- characters, setting, rising action, crisis, climax, falling action, and resolution. All grade levels will do various versions of this paper type with the lower grades starting with simplified versions. The paper continues to get more complex in high school.

Opinion – Agree/Disagree - A critical aspect in the reading/thinking/writing process, is to be able to investigate/read about a topic or author’s viewpoint, critically analyze the ideas being expressed, form your own thoughts in relation to the new information learned, and then be able articulate your opinion on the topic. Opinion papers are such an important part of the CCA writing process, because everything we study must be examined from the Christian Worldview. In this society, we are bombarded with so many conflicting viewpoints (from that of the Bible). It is an invaluable tool to train children to be critical thinkers in examining all information that they take in.

Opinion - Persuasive- persuades a specified audience on a given topic. A good example would be: “ You are a fourth grade student; write a letter persuading your principal to let your class have an extra 10 minutes of recess a day.” Students are taught to create three great arguments that would win the audience over to their side. In this case, the students would be trying to win over the principal. Understanding the audience is a pivotal part of this writing, as proper arguments need to be tailored to ‘win’ that side over to the writer’s line of reasoning.

Opinion – Literature Critique- used to analyze a literary piece. Areas examined are characters, setting, theme, climax, conflict, and mood. Students will voice their own opinion in the conclusion of this paper, stating (without using the word ‘I’) whether they enjoyed the story or not.

Informative- conveys complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. Informative essays fully explain why something is as it is or how something comes about. It makes a point about a subject, problem, issue, or question. It generally requires some research on a topic in order to develop a refined understanding before analysis. Attention to support details is crucial.

Biblical Analysis- take one book of the book of the Bible and fully analyze it's meaning, context, themes, and implications for current understanding. Students writing this paper will have an opportunity to explain what this book means to their lives.

Informative Research- focus on refining research skills, organizing information in a logical format, and utilizing proper citations. In the lower grades, this type of paper is done as a whole class, small group, or in partners. Research topics and depth of analysis are also greatly simplified. Traditional Research Papers with footnoting and quotes are reserved for upper high school.

Paper Outlines

One of the keys to a consistent approach to writing is using the same method in each grade level to create a paper, no matter what type of writing it is. Many students, as well as adults, do not like to write. One main reason for this is the lack of consistent guidelines and expectations. Not to mention, students do not know where to begin, which is where story outlines come in. Using outlines provide great structure and organization. They also help students understand how to create a paragraph – where does it start, when does it end? This is a very ambiguous aspect of writing that even stumps adults. Students are taught that each section of the outline represents one paragraph. When done discussing the items in section, the paragraph is complete.

Copies can be generated of these story outlines as students are new to these paper types. After that, they are simple to construct, and students should think of them as being able to recreate on a ‘scratch’ piece of paper at anytime. An example when this would come in handy is while taking any standardized test where writing is assessed. An outline will not be available for them, but a student will realize he or she could simply create one. No ready-made form is needed. Until students are really confident with a paper type, they may be prompted on what information goes in each area.

Narrative Story Outline

6th-12th Grade

Story Title

I. Setting & Characters

1. When and where does the story take place?
2. Describe the setting & communicate the mood (bright, dark, mysterious, humorous, solemn, suspenseful, scary, peaceful, chaotic...)
3. Describe the characters (include their thoughts and emotions)

II. Rising Action

1. This is where the main conflict begins
2. What are characters doing, saying, feeling?
3. What events happened before the main conflict?

III. Conflict – highest point of action in plot

1. What is the problem, want, or need?
2. What happens?
3. What do the characters do, say, think and feel?

IV. Falling Action and Resolution

1. What leads to the problem being solved or the need being met?
2. What is the end result?

V. Conclusion and Theme

1. Theme/Moral: What was learned?
2. Be sure to answer all unanswered questions.
3. Final Clincher: repeat 2–3 key words in your title

Narrative Story Outline

6th-12th Grade (Student Copy)

Story Title

I. Setting & Characters

1.

2.

3.

II. Rising Action

1.

2.

3.

III. Conflict – highest point of action in plot

1.

2.

3.

IV. Falling Action and Resolution

1.

2.

V. Conclusion and Theme

1.

2.

3.

Informative/Research Essay – 6th-12th Grade

Five Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

Grab Attention

Introduce subject & background information

State three topics

II. Topic Sentence A

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

III. Topic Sentence B

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Topic Sentence C

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Conclusion

Restate three topics

Most significant and WHY

Final closing sentence (reflect opening and title)

Informative/Research Essay 6th-12th Grade (Student Copy)

Five Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

II. Topic Sentence A -

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

III. Topic Sentence B -

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Topic Sentence C -

Find 5 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Conclusion

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Opinion/Agree or Disagree 4th-12th Grade

Four Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

1. Give background on what the story was about
2. Include title and author

II. Major Theme of Story

List the main points that the author is trying to teach in this story/article.
Do not express your opinions here at all. Just state the author's ideas.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Agree or Disagree

Now that you have stated what the author's points are, decide if you agree or disagree and give details to support why.

Opening sentence – agree or disagree with author

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IV. Conclusion

1. Sum up main points of author the author.
2. Sum up main points of why you agree/disagree.

Opinion/Agree or Disagree

4th-12th Grade (Student Copy)

Four Paragraphs

Title of Essay -

I. Introduction

1.

2.

II. Major Theme of Story

List the main points that the author is trying to teach in this story/article.

Do not express your opinions here at all. Just state the author's ideas.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

III. Agree or Disagree

Now that you have stated what the author's points are, decide if you agree or disagree and give details to support why.

Opening sentence – agree or disagree with author

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

IV. Conclusion

1.

2.

Opinion/Critique

4th-12th Grade

Four Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction/Characters/Setting

Introduce book –title, author, and type of story (i.e. historical fiction, fantasy). Discuss and give details of people or animals in the story, place and time, and mood

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

II. Conflict/Plot

Detail the problem(s) that must be solved. Discuss the plan of the story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Climax/Theme

Discuss the turning point of the story, message about life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IV. Conclusion

Liked? Why? Disliked? Why? Never use the pronoun I.

Opinion/Critique

4th-12th Grade (Student Copy)

Four Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction/Characters/Setting

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

II. Conflict/Plot

Detail the problem(s) that must be solved. Discuss the plan of the story.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Climax/Theme

Discuss the turning point of the story, message about life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IV. Conclusion

Liked? Why? Disliked? Why? Never use the pronoun I.

Opinion/Persuasive – 6th-12th Grade

Five Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

Background Information

State 3 arguments

Writer's opinion is clearly stated

II. Topic Sentence A- (#2) 2nd most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

III. Topic Sentence B- (#3) 3rd most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Topic Sentence C- (#1) most compelling argument

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Conclusion

Restate three opinions

Final closing sentence restating opinion

Opinion/Persuasive – 6th-12th Grade

Five Paragraphs

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

II. Topic Sentence A- #2-

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

III. Topic Sentence B- #3-

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Topic Sentence C- #1-

Find 4 items about subject, including details, example, facts, explanation of topic

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Good closing sentence, summing up topic of essay

IV. Conclusion

- 1.
- 2.

Biblical Analysis-Grades 7-12

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

1. Book of Bible, OT or NT
2. Author
3. Date written
4. To whom was it written (or intended for)
5. Location (if applicable)

II. Theme 1

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Theme 2

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IV. Theme 3 or Identify any major conflicts

Discuss and provide details and implications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

V. Conclusion/Reflection

1. Summarize main themes/conflicts and provide the point of each
2. Reflect on what the teachings of this book mean to you

Biblical Analysis-Grades 7-12

Title of Essay

I. Introduction

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

II. Theme 1

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Theme 2

Discuss major theme and provide details and implications.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IV. Theme 3 or Identify any major conflicts

Discuss and provide details and implications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

V. Conclusion/Reflection

- 1.
- 2.

Focus Control Areas

The consistent use of outlines and similar writing instruction is crucial for great writing. Another important aspect is teaching writing techniques, which provide flavor to the writer's style. Stylistic techniques ensure sentence variety and writing that is a pleasure to read. The term Focus Control Area (FCA) means that students are to place a high emphasis of their attention on 'mastering' specific writing techniques, which will improve their writing. The FCA for each individual grade level is based primarily on lessons and concepts that the students have been intensively studying in other areas of English, such as: spelling, grammar, and reading.

In addition, FCAs are vertically aligned from grades K-12 at CCA. Vertical alignment is designed so that students are continuously building upon their skills in incremental steps, without duplication or gaps. The teacher adds new areas gradually that have not been covered yet, while reviewing previous concepts and facilitating practice opportunities.

Writing is most effective when it is taught as a part of the whole English program in an organic, intuitive manner. For example, when a student learns a vocabulary word, he or she reinforces this knowledge by reading it in a novel and masters the word by integrating the term into his or her writing.

The following pages detail the FCAs for each grade level and should be used to constantly tweak and enhance writing.

Overview of IEW (Institute for Excellence in Writing) Skills by Grade Level

Grade	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
IEW skill to be reviewed	N/A	N/A	N/A	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives Who/which clause Because clause	Who/which clause Because clause Adverb clause (WWW.ASIA) to create complex sentence
Skills that should be mastered at this grade	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Who/which clause Because clause
IEW skills to be introduced	Focusing on writing complete sentences	Focusing on writing complete sentences and writing process	Strong verbs -ly words quality adjectives	Who/which clause Because clause	Adverb clause (WWW.ASIA) to create complex sentences	-ly openers Prepositional openers

Grade	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th- 12th
IEW skill to be reviewed	Adverb clause (WWW.ASIA) to create complex sentences -ly openers Prepositional openers	-ly openers Prepositional openers Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss Decorations: conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Decorations: Questions, 3 sss (short staccato sentences), dramatic opening-closing Introduce Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition	All sentence openers and decorations. Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition, repeating – ings, repeating –lys, repeating adjectives or nouns, repeating verbs	N/A
Skills that should be mastered at this grade	Adverb clause (WWW.ASIA) to create complex sentences	-ly openers Prepositional openers	Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss Decorations: conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Sentence openers and decorations. Triple Extensions	All skills should be mastered and being used in writing
IEW skills to be introduced	Sentence openers: ing, clausal, vss Introduce – decorations: conversation/quotations, alliteration, simile-metaphor	Decorations: Questions, 3 sss (short staccato sentences), dramatic opening-closing Introduce Triple Extensions: word repetition, phrase and clausal repetition	Triple extensions: Repeating –ings, repeating –lys, repeating adjectives or nouns, repeating verbs.	Advanced dressups and openers : dual adverbs, strong verbs, and dual adjectives	Adverbial and adjectival teeter totters -ed opener

Dress Ups:

1. **Strong verbs**- strong verbs are action verbs that give a more information or are more descriptive. They can replace banned words, be synonyms for words that are used repeatedly in a paper or paragraph, or just a very descriptive verb.
2. **-ly adverbs**- these are adverbs that end in ly and tell how (or when) something was done. This is another way to paint a better picture for your reader.
3. **Quality adjective** - these are more descriptive adjectives that are used to describe nouns in writing. They can replace banned words, or can be added to paper to create a better description.
4. **Who/which or that clauses** – this is an adjective clause that is used to describe a noun and add variety to sentences.

Example: Mrs. Burrow is the 4th grade teacher. Mrs. Burrow likes Dr. Pepper.

Mrs. Burrow, who is the 4th grade teacher, likes Dr. Pepper.

5. **WWW.ASIA clauses, because clauses, and advanced clauses** – are subordinate or adverb clauses that help create complex sentences and add variety to students sentences. WWW.ASIA begin with **where, when, while, as, since, if, although**, because clause begins with **because**, other subordinate clauses begin with **unless, before, after**.

Example: Sara worked on her homework. She went to swim lessons.

After Sara worked on her homework, she went to swim lessons.

Sara worked on her homework until she went to swim lessons.

Sentence Openers:

1. **Subject opener-**
2. **Prepositional opener** – Sentence begins with a prepositional phrase which is separated with a comma.
 - a. Example: In the morning, we left for our trip.
3. **-ly opener:** Sentence begins with an adverb which is followed by a comma.
 - a. Example: Suddenly, the dog began barking at the people passing on the street.
4. **-ing phrase:** Sentence begins with phrase beginning with a -ing verb.
 - a. Example: Sitting on the bench, Tommy waited for the bus to arrive.
5. **www.asia phrase:** Sentence beginning with a subordinate clause that begins in where, while, when, as, since, if, although.
 - a. Example: As the boys ran into the house, it began to rain.
6. **Very short sentences:** Using two or three short sentences for dramatic impact.
 - a. Example: It was dark. It was cold. It was late. OR She shouted. She screamed. She cried.

Banned Word list with suggested strong verbs or quality adjectives:

GO/WENT & COME/CAME (strong verb suggested replacements)

A slow or relaxed pace:

amble
coast
crawl
drift
drudge
journey
lag
lumber
lurch
meander
mosey
plod
sashay
saunter
shuffle
slither
stride
stroll
trudge
waltz

In a certain direction:

advance
ascend
descend
plummet
plunge
proceed
progress
retreat
sink
surge
sweep
swoop
take off
veer
zig zag

To leave:

depart
exit

flee

In a clumsy way:

blunder
burst
careen
charge
shuffle
stagger
stumble
topple
trip
tumble

In a hurry or loud:

bolt
burst
dart
dash
fly
glide
hurry
hustle
jolt
leap
plow
race
rocket
rush
scamper
scuttle
sprint
storm
strut
thump
trot
whirl
whisk
whiz
whoosh

zoom

In a quiet way:

creep
sneak
tip toe

In a fun happy way:

bounce
bound
flutter
glide
leap
prance
soar
twirl
whirl

In a specific way:

climb
dive
drive
float
flock
flop
flounder
fly
gallop
wormed
parade
pivot
ripple
sail
soar
slither
swerve
tour

Other:

continue
cross
follow
forge

maneuver
stream
trail

travel
trample
trek

wander

Say/said
(strong verb suggested replacements)

When angry or disagree:

accuse
admonish
blast
challenge
charge
chide
deny
denounce
disagree
dispute
contest
contradict
debated
deny
fume
grumble
insult
jeer
lash out
object
oppose
protest
rant
rave
rebuke
refute
ridicule
roar
scoff
scold
scowl
screech
shout
shriek
snap
snarl
sneer
snicker

tattle
taunt
tease
threaten
thunder
vent
yell

**To agree with someone or
give in:**

acknowledge
affirm
agree
chorus
concede
concur
confirm
echo
sigh
swear

Specific Situation:

apologize
complain
confess
echo
flatter
greet
echo
lie
pant
pledge
pray

To beg someone:

plead
beg
beseech
bargain
scold

sing
stammer
stutter
urge

Ask questions:

inquired
interrogate
query
question
quiz

To give information:

add
admit
advise
boast
cite
commented
confide
declare
decree
announce
describe
dictate
allege
assert
claim
elaborate
emphasize
foretell
imply
infer
inform
insist
instruct
mention

state
stress
submit
suggest
swear
voice
volunteer

vow
begin
continue

demand
implore
propose

To ask someone to do something:
urge

Say/said
(strong verb suggested replacements cont.)

To answer:
remark
reply
report
answer

implore
howl
roar
screech
squawk

whine

To warn or instruct:
caution
command
nag
notify
remind
warn

To talk a lot/ repeat:

babble
chant
jabber
echo
mimic
nag
drone
yak
persist
ramble
rant
rave
recite
recount
remind
repeat
yap

While happy or sad:

cackled
chuckled
cry
encourage
gasp
giggle
grieve
groan
grumble
lament
moan
pout
serenade
shout
shriek
sigh
sing
sob
sulk
snicker
wail
weep
whimper

To say quietly:

murmur
mutter
whisper

To call:

Summon

Speak loudly/excited:

bellow
boom
clamor
cackle
demand
cry
exclaim
explode

To sing:

belt out
chirp
entertain
fill the air
perform
serenade
solo
trill
warble
with music

Get/got
(strong verb suggested replacements)

To get an object or be able:

acquire
enter
capture
appear
grasp
earn
show up
seize
turn up
receive
return
apprehend
attain
pocket
reap
discover
procure
grab
snatch
purchase
steal
collect
able
achieve
can
profit
secure

gather

To go or get out:

bounce
climb
reach
fall
spring
fly
roll
glean
enter
appear
show up
turn up
return
approach
join
intrude
invade
arrive
infiltrate
burst in

realize
fathom
figure out
discover
understand
grasp

To understand:

comprehend
realize
perceive
catch on

Look/See/Eat
(strong verb suggested replacements)

To see/ look at:

watch
behold
check out
detect
discover
examine
explore
eye
find
gape
gawk
gaze
glance
glare
glimpse
inspect
witness
monitor
notice
observe
peek
peep
peer
scrutinize
search
spot
spy
stare
study
survey

Look for:

canvass
forage
hunt for
pursue
ransack
rummage
scavenge
scour
scout
scrounge
sweep
track down
trail

To eat:

devour
snack
chow
chomp
nibble
munch
bite
chew
digest
dine
feast
gobble up
gorge
graze
inhale
nosh
partake of
pick at
pig out
scarf
swallow
wolf

Good/Pretty/Nice (Quality Adjectives Suggested Replacements)

Person/idea:	Object:	To agree:	Pretty:	Nice:
scrupulous	terrific	agreeable	appealing	kind
godly	superior	satisfactory	beautiful	friendly
virtuous	extraordinary	presentable	attractive	pleasant
moral	marvelous	tolerable	elegant	amiable
righteous	excellent	all right	pleasant	cordial
honest	super	pleasant	delightful	gentle
noble	wonderful	pleasing	fair	delightful
wholesome	magnificent	flowing	darling	courteous
pure	splendid	effective	captivating	helpful
innocent	exemplary	worthwhile	gorgeous	considerate
courteous	fascinating	alluring	lovely	
well-mannered	heavenly	Sensory:	lovely	polite
obedient	superb	melodious	charming	enchanted
capable	beneficial	sweet	breathtaking	sweet
trustworthy	top quality	harmonious	exquisite	charming
accomplished	unparalleled	golden	lovely	cooperative
respectable	outstanding	clear	dazzling	neighborly
knowledgeable	delicious	pleasant	handsome	genial
gallant	unrivaled	heavenly	ideal	charismatic
qualified	delectable	glorious	ravishing	
unequalled	exquisite	spectacular	radiant	
expert	sumptuous	majestic	divine	
experienced	praiseworthy		splendid	
productive	favorable		bewitching	
commendable	appetizing		magnificent	
admirable	yummy			
credible	savory			
brilliant	refreshing			
ingenious	tasty			
resourceful	succulent			
inventive	revered			
creative	prized			
innovative	cherished			
idolized				
imaginative				

Bad/ Mean/ Ugly
(quality adjective suggested replacements)

Person/idea:	Actions:	Objects/things:	Mean:
wicked	heinous	imperfect	cruel
unrighteous	terrible	inferior	obnoxious
amoral	spiteful	second-class	rude
immoral	awful	defective	ferocious
ungodly	brutal	inadequate	savage
dishonest	diabolical	unacceptable	brutal
unscrupulous	atrocious	lousy	miserly
dissolute	abominable	unfit	selfish
roguish	despicable	detrimental	hostile
crooked	contemptible	damaged	callous
untrustworthy	vile	ruined	cantankerous
disloyal	sordid	venomous	despicable
treasonous	foul	treacherous	formidable
insidious	wretched	regrettable	malicious
deceitful	reprehensible	horrible	nasty
sinister	disgraceful	UGLY	snide
sinful	shameful		vicious
obnoxious	grotesque		vile
criminal	scandalous		unscrupulous
base	snide		wicked
unreliable	revolting		sinister
naughty	obnoxious		villainous
repulsive	horrible		fiendish
disgusting	detestable		unpleasant
sly	crafty		unfriendly
conniving	cheating	unattractive	
cunning	dishonest	homely	
harsh	naughty	gruesome	

Big/small/a lot
(quality adjective suggested replacements)

Big

bulky
ample
jumbo
colossal
enormous
gigantic
humongous
immense
mammoth
massive
sizable
substantial

Small

baby
itty bitty
cramped
inadequate
insufficient
little
meager
tiny
puny
petite
scant
short

A lot

abundance
bunch
bundle
cluster
heap
load
mass
plenty
stacks
numerous
several
myriad

tremendous
vast
whopping
burly
brimming
towering
broad
spacious
monumental
robust
stupendous
prominent
grand
huge

slight
teensy
teeny
trivial
undersized
wee
miniscule
minute
miniature
meager
narrow
slight
thin
brief
sparse
skimpy

multitude
profuse
considerable

ADVERBS

Fast or often

abruptly
anxiously
fervently
frantically
briskly
furiously
suddenly
hastily
immediately
incessantly
impatiently
instantly
quickly
intently
rapidly
intensely
relentlessly

Slow or careful

evenly
slowly
cautiously
deliberately
exactly
laboriously
solidly
steadily
calmly
carefully
patiently
diligently
properly
distinctly

Positive/ good

happily
excitedly
joyfully
enthusiastically
kindly
soothingly
beautifully
meaningfully
generously
gleefully
nicely
sweetly
sympathetically
gratefully
thankfully
thoughtfully
happily
tenderly
gently
happily
helpfully
triumphantly
playfully
positively
incredibly
delightfully
wholeheartedly
proudly
amazingly
bravely
serenely
reassuringly
brightly
mightily
successfully
cleverly

Negative/ bad

slyly
angrily
rudely
solemnly
ferociously
foolishly
smugly
sharply
snidely
miserably
frightfully
mistakenly
mockingly
mournfully
stubbornly
gravely
clumsily
suspiciously
threateningly
greedily
grudgingly
tragically
crossly
unmercifully
dejectedly
unwillingly
deceivingly
harshly
violently
viciously
hopelessly
unfortunately

**Instead of
really or very**

exceptionally
extremely
considerably
tremendously
decidedly
definitely
truly
pointedly
utterly
distinctly
especially

**To what extent
is it done**

liberally
lavishly
casually
discreetly
partially
lightly
freely
fully
nearly
easily
vastly
virtually

Definite:

truthfully
knowingly
explicitly
seriously
apparently
absolutely
actually
frankly
surely
naturally
obviously
literally
undeniably

Shy/confident

apologetically
shyly
bashfully
quietly
sheepishly
hesitantly
timidly
confidently
loudly
assuredly
smugly

charismatically
proudly
effectively

**When/ how
often**

gradually
occasionally
finally
eventually
scarcely
evenly
increasingly
constantly
continually
weekly
annually
periodically
repeatedly

yearly
daily
infrequently
frequently
seldomly
commonly
typically
inconveniently

**Other how
adverbs**

abnormally
absentmindedly
separately
aimlessly
smoothly
longingly
mechanically
silently
softly
neatly
surprisingly
closely
openly

notably
obligingly
tightly
conveniently
coolly
correctly
physically
highly
curiously
dearly
possibly
ultimately

potentially
powerfully
unknowingly
innocently
readily
dreamily
interestingly
willfully
restfully
rigidly

Decorations:

1. **Alliteration** – when two or more words that are near each other in a sentence start with the same sound (not necessarily letter).
 - a. Example: Dozens of dogs were digging in the dirt.
Colorful kites climbed into the clouds.
2. **Three short staccato sentences** – placing three short sentences together will help grab a reader’s attention. They should have two to five words. Best when used at the beginning or end of paragraphs.
 - a. **Example:** The young girl floated gracefully around the dance floor. She knew everyone was staring at her, and then it happened. She tripped. She fell. She landed facedown in shame.

The church in the Middle Ages was becoming more corrupt and no longer following the Bible. It was wrong. Someone had to tell them. Martin Luther did.
3. **Similes and metaphors** – a literary technique that is used to describe something by comparing it to something else. Similes compare two objects using like or as. Metaphors compare two things by saying one is the other.
 - a. Simile examples: He was busy as a bee. The snow covered the field like a blanket.
 - b. Metaphor examples- Jesus said,; “I am the vine; you are the branches. The snow blanketed the field.
4. **Personification** – Giving human like qualities to inanimate objects or animals.
 - a. Examples: The tires squealed with delight as the race began.
The boat groaned as the angry wind tossed it about in the waves.

5. **Triple extensions** – repeating a word or phrase three times for dramatic effect. You can repeat the same word, a part of speech, a phrase or clause.
- a. Example (same word) – The boy was the hero of the land. The boy had defeated the dragon. The boy was a fraud.
 - b. Example (part of speech) – The new found country was baron, desolate, and intimidating. (adjectives)
 - c. Jesus was a savior for the Jews, for the gentiles, and for the whole world.
6. **Assonance** – words that have the same internal vowel sound found close together in a sentence.
- a. Example: The band clamored and clanged on their instruments
7. **Consonance** – words that end in the same consonant sound.
- a. Example: He took the stack of brick to Zach.
8. **Dramatic Openers/ Hooks-** designed to grab the reader’s attention
- a. **Question:** What would the world be like if Columbus never dared to set sail in search of a new route to India?
 - b. **Statistic Fact:** The Golden Gate Bridge took a mere three years to build, but its benefit has been felt for generations.
 - c. **Quote:** “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness....”
 - d. **Shock:** Handheld electronic devices are robbing our youth of their childhood.
 - e. **Suspended interest:** No one knew when they went to work that morning that their lives and our country would be changed forever.
 - f. **An imperative (command):** Imagine the most relaxing vacation of your life.
 - g. **Fragments:** Faith. Lots of faith. The next step in my life was going to take lots of faith.
 - h. **Name dropping:** Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, and Donald Duck greeted our family as we walked through the gates.

Editing and Evaluation

Writing is an open-ended assignment, very different than a worksheet of math problems, for example. That being said open-ended assignments are much more difficult to assess, since there can be many ‘right’ answers. The use of rubrics greatly helps with this problem. Rubrics provide a very clear expectation for students. Teachers and students know exactly how an assignment is being assessed, which really takes the subjectivity out of the grading. A rubric is broken up into different areas of assessment. Every paper entering the portfolio will be graded using a rubric. Both the final paper and the rubric will be entered as the sample. The following represents the areas that are assessed.

Writing Rubric Grades 4-12

Assessment Area	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
<p>Content and Development/Elaboration Maximum Possible: 50 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Content is not only excellent but all points are well developed. All major points are fully supported with elaborate details. Purpose is clear throughout. (50-45)</p>	<p>Content is comprehensive, accurate. - Major points are stated clearly and are well supported. Content and purpose of the writing are clear. (44-40)</p>	<p>Content is not comprehensive. - Major points are addressed, but not well supported. Content is inconsistent with regard to purpose and clarity of thought. (39-35)</p>	<p>Content is incomplete. - Major points are not clear and /or persuasive. (below 35)</p>
<p>Organization And Structure Maximum Possible: 20 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Organization is excellent. The flow throughout is seamless with excellent use of transitions. (20-19)</p>	<p>Content is well organized. Structure of the paragraph is clear and easy to follow. (18-16)</p>	<p>Structure of the paragraph is not easy to follow. - Paragraph transitions need improvement. (15-14)</p>	<p>Organization and structure detract from the message of the writer. - Paragraphs are disjointed and lack transition of thoughts. (below 14)</p>
<p>Format Maximum Possible: 10 points</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Strong intro and conclusion, with the appropriate number of body paragraphs. Content follows exact length guidelines. (10-9)</p>	<p>Paper follows designated guidelines. Paper is the appropriate length as described for the assignment. All paragraphs are present. (8-7)</p>	<p>Paper follows most guidelines. - Paper is over/ under word length. (6-5)</p>	<p>Paper lacks many elements of correct formatting. - Paragraphs are inadequate/excessive in length or missing. (below 5)</p>
<p>Readability Maximum Possible: 20 points _____</p>	<p>Only 4 or fewer mistakes with grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (20-19)</p>	<p>6 or fewer mistakes grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (18-16)</p>	<p>8 or fewer mistakes grammar/spelling and overall ability to write (15-14)</p>	<p>Some correct usage but more than 10 total mistakes were made. (below 14)</p>

Additional comments:

Total Grade: _____

Revision Checklist

Focus on one target skill at a time. Read the item and then go back and read your paper for each item. Make sure your piece is exactly how you want it.

1. Do I have an opening sentence(s) that hooks the reader? _____
2. Is my piece focused? Does it stick to the topic
throughout the piece? _____
3. Is my piece clear? Does it say what I want it to say?
Do my sentences and ideas make sense? Flow? _____
4. Have I completely answered all the questions asked in
the prompt? Refer back to prompt to check. _____
5. Have I included details, explanation, and elaboration
of my ideas? _____
6. Do I have a closing sentence(s)? Does it close and
tie up the piece? _____
7. Do my sentences show rather than tell? _____
8. Do I have a varied word choice? _____
9. Do I have a varied sentence structure (questions,
exclamations, dialogue, one word sentences, variety
of length)? _____
10. Do I have transition words? _____
11. Do I use figurative language? (simile, metaphor,
personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, etc)? _____

Proofreading Marks

≡ Capitalize letter.

⊙ Add a period.

⊙ Add a question mark.

^, Add a comma.

^' Add an apostrophe.

○ Do not use a space.

”” Add quotation marks.

⌒ Take words out.

○ Spell correctly.

/ Lowercase letter.

⌞ Indent.

^ Add words.

| Divide into two words.

? This is confusing.

Exemplars

The following section is a collection of excellent student examples of the various paper types. Understanding what constitutes great writing and being able to model that finished product is a critical part of improving writing. Using these papers as models will enhance writing. Consult this section throughout the writing process for each of these papers. Please note that these are superlative examples. The expectation is not that all students must perform at this very high level.

Lousy Literature
Opinion/Literature Critique
Written by a 6th Grade Student

“The Fun They Had” should definitely not be on your list to read. It is a boring piece of literature. Isaac Asimov wrote this terrible science fiction narrative that is only three pages long. He completely abandoned the idea of putting action into it. Boys and Girls Page published this work of Isaac’s on December 1 in the year of 1951. Although this short story was written well, it is not exciting at all.

The narrative describes Margie, an eleven year old girl, who lives in the future. Her enemy in life is school. Her companion, Tommy, is two years older (and snottier) than Margie. On a scale of intelligence, he would rank slightly higher, too. On May 17, 2157, in Margie’s house, the friends examine and discuss a discovery that Tommy made. Since this piece of writing reveals little information at a time, the reader is kept curious at the beginning.

The story begins with Margie disliking school tremendously. Then, Tommy finds a real *printed* book, which is surprising, because *all* of the books are on electronic screens in the time period the story takes place. The book tells about the type of school that existed centuries ago. Later, Tommy, who has previously read the book, makes fun of Margie when she does not understand what is written in it. Margie is astonished to find that teachers used to be people, not robots like they are in 2157. Finally, Margie discovers that all the kids came together to have school with each other, instead of having a teacher live in your home and only teach you.

After reading the book for a little while, Margie realizes that she wishes she could attend the old kind of school. Then, she has to start her regular school for the day. Margie

keeps thinking about the students and “the fun they had” in the type of school in the book. The story constantly gives information about education. The book found by Tommy has a method for learning that is different than the one to which the kids are accustomed. The children discuss their opinions about both forms of school and how education should work.

“The Fun They Had” is considerably dull. It has no action or suspense whatsoever in the entire story. Even the topic is not exciting. Three pages of kids talking about school is not worth reading.

An American "Must-See" Movie
Opinion/Critique
Written by a 7th Grade Student

"The Rocketeer" is one of the top ten full length motion pictures released in the summer of 1991. Because of the few moderately violent scenes it contains, this movie is rated PG and is not recommended for children under the age of seven. Bill Campbell, who plays the part of the "Rocketeer", does an excellent job portraying a spunky air pilot in the late 1930s. The sound track is captivating, and Buena Vista's special effects are superb.

This realistic fiction movie is a typical American drama with heroes and villains. The pilot Cliff, his friend Peevie, and Cliff's girlfriend Jenny are just ordinary people who innocently stumble into this adventure. Masquerading as a Hollywood movie star, the insidious Nazi spy Neville Sinclair and the gangsters who work for him not knowing that he's a spy, chase Cliff and his rocket all over the city. Suspense is continuous, and the humor is genuine. Danger is ever-present. This action-packed screen spectacular takes place in Hollywood, and has been flavored with a bit of Indiana Jones excitement.

As the movie begins, Cliff, who is soon to become the "Rocketeer," is testing out a new plane, which he and his companion Peevie are hoping to enter into a national air race. While Cliff is on a test flight, gangsters who have stolen a top-secret invention suddenly appear below shooting machine guns at a following FBI patrol car. Thinking that Cliff is an FBI agent, a gangster shoots at his plane as it passes overhead. The plane drops rapidly. Cliff tries in vain to gain control over the ruined aircraft, but it hits the runway, crashes into the gangsters' car, careens into a gasoline truck, and bursts into flames. The action intensifies throughout the movie as Cliff finds the rocket pack, his

girlfriend is kidnapped and his life and the lives of his friends are endangered by Sinclair and the ruthless gangsters.

In the dramatic climax, Cliff, Jenny, the Nazis, and the sinister spy Sinclair struggle for their lives on a burning zeppelin. Sinclair meets his flaming demise. As can be expected, just as the air ship disintegrates into a fiery inferno, Cliff and Jenny leap onto a ladder, which is dangling off of Howard Hughes' awaiting plane. This story, like a fairy tale, has a happy ending in which Cliff is unexpectedly rewarded for his heroic efforts with a new racing plane from Howard Hughes and with his girlfriend's enduring love.

As is typical of most American movies, good triumphs over evil in "The Rocketeer" as well. However, it is an excellent show that will keep you on the edge of your seat. You will not be bored. If you enjoy suspenseful movies that have touches of humor here and there, you should definitely see this film.

“The Foghorn”
Opinion/Critique
Written by an 8th Grade Student

The “Foghorn” is as thrilling and spin-tinglingly vague as its name suggest. Ray Bradbury’s magnificent descriptions seem to melt into your mind’s eyes, as you are captured in suspense. You will be consumed for all seven pages of this exhilarating fiction short story. McDunn and Johnny are just two lighthouse keepers, when they are perspicuously touched by the sprawling finder of Bradbury’s imagination. Beautifully written and unexpected sorrowful, this short story was published in 1951 and is nothing less than a display of poetic genius.

The forceful storyline and intense elements completely contrast with Jonnny and McDunns’ utter normalcy. Having finally adapted to the life a lonely lighthouse keeper, Johnny is perturbed by the murmurs of danger, carefully pass one by McDunn. With much caution, the older lighthouse keeper proceeds to tell Johnny of inexplicable events, taking place on the cold clammy shore, where their own lighthouse beckons to the sea. In deep autumn, as the wind gnashes its teeth at their noses and fingers, McDunn’s story unfolds.

Amid the mist and bitter cold, the two-manned lighthouse stands as a perpetual signal to ships at sea. As McDunn continued to tell Johnny of things that has happened in this very night, years ago, a slow gliding, a resonance, with a deep force that sends chills up his spine, emerges from the water. It is a monster. Johnny knows not whether to fear it, or console it, for has such loneliness in its eyes. Then, loud and clear, the monster begins forlornly crying to the lighthouse, with the same voice, Johnny realizes, as the foghorn. Then, McDunn cruelly and abruptly stops the sound.

Patience is several times displayed at Johnny adapts to his lonesome lifestyle. McDunn anticipates the trepidation, and a lack of patience, when the sea monster hurls itself at the lighthouse. Never underestimate the power of desperateness, produced by miserable seclusion. When the monster rises from the sea, after months of travel, his patience suddenly flees from him. In a flurry, the monster demolishes the lighthouse, after the foghorn stops calling back to him. This sends McDunn and Johnny fleeing to the storm cellar, patiently waiting for rescuers. Then, as if nothing has happened, as if a monster has not even come, they watch the calm morning tide and reminisce over the abysmal event of the night.

With strong plot, relatable characters, and beautiful descriptions, Ray Bradbury's, "The Foghorn" is an all-time favorite. The character's normalcy gives excellent perspective, and comically clashes with the events in the story. The theme, patience, can easily be traced through the twists and turn of creativity. If you are looking for something scrumptious to read, you most definitely want to add this short story to your repertoire.

Negative Tech Affect
Opinion/Agree/Disagree
Written by a 6th Grade Student

If you aren't careful, technology can have a destructive influence on your social life. The author of "How Technology Affects Us," mads942, explains this in their article. They give excellent points on many ways technology can do this. Heed mads942's advice and be wary of allowing technology to impede social interactions.

In their article, "How Technology Affects Us," mads942 cautions us that technology is horrible for our personal interactions. They explain that it separates people from reality. An iPod is an example of such a device because, when listening to music, some people tend to become distracted from the real world. Another argument is that high-tech items hinder personal communication, as the Internet distracts individuals from spending time with friends and family. Technology, especially video games, gives us the idea of instant gratification, receiving what we want when we want it, according to the author. Mads942 also points out that there are many dangerous people on the Internet posting dangerous things. The author makes it clear that, in their opinion, technology is hazardous to our social life.

Mads942 declaration that technology has a negative influence on a person's social interactions is correct. It can be very distracting from conversations, especially iPads or video games. Even though you can meet people online and make more "friends," you never actually understand what they are like. If the average American is without convenience, like when an electronic device takes more than a few seconds to load, he will complain, so technology does teach the idea of instant gratification. The Internet can

be extremely hazardous. Anything, even evil or dangerous information, can be posted. Technology hinders us from developing our social skills.

The author reveals the truth in their article, “How Technology Affects Us.” Technology isolates one from reality, hinders personal communication, and promotes the idea of instant gratification. I believe the same because it tends to be annoyingly distracting, it doesn’t help you understand the personalities of your “friends,” and people who normally use it sometimes end up spoiled. Technology is awful for our personal interactions.

Who is in Control?
Opinion/Agree/Disagree
Written by an 8th Grade Student

Being taught to follow one's instinct and be a leader sounds like a great thing to teach children, but is that really a good lesson? If it's not, then who should be in control of one's life? In the persuasive essay "Soul of a Citizen", author Paul Lobe emphatically discusses the importance of becoming socially and politically involved and stepping up to become a leader. He clearly believes that we can succeed in those things based on our strength alone. Although getting involved and being a leader are good things, it will also be entirely ineffective if that is not God's desire for your life.

Lobe emphasizes that we can easily accomplish tasks through our own strength. In a quote from the article, Lobe states, "If we get involved all of our problems will be fixed and we will be happy." We as humans are not perfect. Because of our inherently sinful nature, we never will be. Therefore, it is impossible to 'fix' all of our problems through self-reliance and make the world perfect, as the author states. Lobe's ideals basically put the person as the center of his or her world. These teachings are clearly in direct opposition to those who hold Christian beliefs. Only God may live at the center of a man's life. He desires to occupy your heart entirely and for you to keep nothing from him.

Another belief espoused by Lobe is that all people should step up and become successful leaders. This notion is also in direct opposition to Biblical teaching. As Romans 8:28 states, "And we know that all things work together for the good to them who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." What this means is we cannot become good leaders on our own and for own selfish purposes and desires.

Attempting this means that we are not leading and accomplishing for the good of the Kingdom. God does not bless these aspirations that are wholly selfish, nor should He. Through the Holy Spirit, it is also stated in Matthew that, “There is no possible way that a human being can be happy in their own private lives alone.” Chasing after such a self-centered life is as foolish as chasing after the wind, as Solomon said.

Lobe’s two main points in “Soul of a Citizen” would seem like great aspirations at first. Who does not desire to be a great leader and tackle all the problems of the world to make it perfect? His writing is devoid of any recognition of our divine Creator, without whom we can accomplish nothing. Man’s greatest mistake is in his thinking that he can conquer and rule the world based upon his own strength and abilities. Not only do Christians know otherwise, they do not seek to live outside the will of God and His plan for our lives. According to scripture, if we ask God to be all we need in our lives and ask for His love, then He will bless us through a loving relationship and be totally sufficient in all we need. So in conclusion, I disagree with Lobe’s beliefs. In fact they are at opposite ends of the Christian belief. My response is, “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)”

Year Round School is a Mistake
Opinion/Persuasive
Written by a 6th Grade Student

The final bell rings. It's the last day of school, and summer has finally come! Students don't have to think about school for at least another 2 1/2 months. That is the way it should always be. Schools should continue using the traditional calendar and not a year-round schedule. There are numerous downsides to year-round schooling. It has no positive effects on education, it adds to costs, and it disrupts the long-awaited summer vacation.

Contrary to the well-accepted belief, year-round schooling has no constructive impact on education. Most year-round schedules use the 45-15 method: 45 days of school followed by 15 days off. Because of this, there are many first and last days of school. All those transitions disrupt the learning process. Also, there is no evidence of higher test scores. Due to that, many schools that change to year-round schedules end up switching back. For example, since 1980, 95 percent of schools that tried the year-round schedule changed back to a traditional calendar. It is obvious that changing to year-round schooling does not help students; therefore, why is the change necessary?

Like any other facility, keeping a school open requires a great deal of money. When a school changes to a year-round schedule, the costs skyrocket. Keeping school open in the middle of summer requires air conditioning, and that adds significantly to the school's expenses. The usual utility bills grow because of the additional open-school time. Finally, teachers must be paid for all the weeks they are working. With all these factors, the cost of keeping schools open becomes immensely high. For example, a high school in Arizona had a cost increase of \$157,000 when they switched to year-round schooling. Some schools may not be able to handle such increases, and other schools that

can handle these expenses could be doing better things with the money. Is year-round school really where the money should go?

An important part of a child's life is summertime. With year-round schedules, students would hardly have any time to relax. During the 15-day breaks, they would be thinking about their quick return to school. It would also be difficult to coordinate family vacations with parents' work schedules. Similarly, children would not be able to go to most summer camps. One expert, Dr. Peter Scales, says, "The biggest plus of camp is that camps help young people discover and explore their talents, interests, and values. Most schools don't satisfy all these needs. Kids who have these kinds of [camp] experiences end up being healthier and have fewer problems." Obviously, the summer is crucial to a child's learning and development. Why should this invaluable part of a young person's life be taken away?

It is evident that year-round schooling is not the best option for the school calendar. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the traditional school year. Why change something that works so well? The final bell rings. Let's make sure this bell means that the "real" summer vacation has come.

Grade A
Opinion/Persuasive
Written by a 7th Grade Student

An A, the highest grade you can receive in the book. When people see it, they think of many different things. In the eyes of many, an A is seen as a well-deserved result of hard work. Hard work is exactly what Ashley Burrow, a seventh grade student at Cornerstone Christian Academy. For one thing, she understands all of the topics and quickly. All of her homework is completed, brought to school, and turned in on time, allowing Ashley to receive full marks. With the correct guidance that she receives, she can truly thrive from learning. With her outstanding abilities as a student, Ashley deserves the grade A at CCA this year.

A complete understanding of the topic is a necessity if a student of any grade is to thrive. Ashley is able to accomplish this task and quickly. Her ability to put definitions in her own words is extraordinary. Her high level vocabulary helps develop well worded definitions. Explaining with examples is another strength in Ashley's educational life. In sixth grade, her teacher did a unit on the figure of speech, puns. Ashley took time to come up with amazing examples to bring to class to help her peers. Helping other students excel when struggling by hearing the definition in new words is another fascinating ability of this gifted girl. Understanding the topic to the length that she can help others understand it is just one of the many reasons Ashley Burrow deserves an A as a grade this year.

A grade A student like Ashley Burrow must be responsible with their homework through all three stages. One, the student must bring their homework home and complete it. Step two; they must successfully transfer their homework back to school. Lastly, step

three; they must remember to turn it in to their teacher. Ashley successfully completes this process every time. When given back her homework, she reviews it thoroughly, searching for any possible improvements, and putting them into action. For example, every time her students finish a paper, Ashley's teacher, Mrs. Ray, calls up all of her students individually to discuss what they could do better. During these conferences, Ashley listens intently, intending to correct what her teacher is pointing out to improve her papers all the more. Every student should be responsible with their work if they are intending to excel in academics, and that is just one of the many reasons Ashley deserves an A for a grade.

Guidance is necessary for anyone, and a grade A student needs phenomenal teachers to help advance their natural abilities. A thorough teaching is required for any bright student to succeed. Sometimes compliments are the one thing that a person needs to excel. The amazing teachers in the lives of students help them express their thoughts and put things in their own words. A harsh teacher is a horrible teacher. Nobody is perfect, and that is why no professor should look for perfection on the homework that they collect. Fair grading marks a wonderful teacher. A teacher with an extraordinary student must correctly guide that student if they are to succeed.

Clearly, Ashley Burrow possesses all of the qualities of a grade A student. She understands all of the taught material instantly. To receive excellent marks on homework, all students must turn it in, like Ashley. Without the correct guidance, no pupil can thrive. Ashley's teachers help advance her natural talent in learning. It is because of all these marvelous reasons that Ashley Burrow deserves an A.

Life to the Fullest
Informative Research
Written by a 6th Grade Student

Enormously excluded was Helen Keller from the world at a frightfully young age, when she was stricken with what people think was scarlet fever. Helen then recovered, but was unfortunately left with little connections to the rest of the world. Because of Helen's parent's devotion in never giving up, they found the one person who changed Helen's whole life; her name was Annie Sullivan. Triumphantly, despite her downfalls, Helen lived a normal and busy life, which surprised the people around her. Helen lived her whole life to the fullest

The year was 1880. The month was June. The day was the 27th. Excitement filled the Keller household. Mrs. Keller then exclaimed, "It's a girl!" Wonderful were Helen Keller's first eighteen months of life. At that point in her life she was stricken with a terrible sickness. Dying, Helen lay helplessly on her bed, and the doctor could do nothing to help her. Fortunately, after being miserably ill for what seemed like forever, Helen slowly started to recover. Although fully recovered from the sickness, Helen was left both blind and deaf. She also could not talk, since she was not able to hear. Being extremely spoiled, Helen had absolutely no discipline, which led her to become what her parents described as a "wild and unruly child." Between the years 1880-1881, many changes happened in Helen Keller's life.

On March 3rd 1887, Helen Keller's life started having some radical changes. Annie Sullivan showed up at her door that day. Helen could not see her approach, but she could feel the movements of her footsteps. Since she wanted to make a truly wonderful first impression on Helen, Annie immediately gave the seven year old a gorgeous doll.

Hoping to be able to teach Helen sign language, she placed her hand in Helen's hand and made the signs D-O-L-L, which only got her a confused look back at her. Fairly soon after that, Helen had learning a great variety of words, since she was so eager to learn, and even had put many words into full sentences. Helen was a smart child. After she had mastered sign language, her teacher brought her cards and had Helen feel them. "Why do these have bumps on them, it feels like sand" Helen asked. She soon understood that those cards were cards with Braille on them. Although blind and deaf, it did not keep Helen from learning, and loving it! Before she was even ten years old, she had already mastered Math, Latin and German.

Helen Keller loved to write; it was actually her favorite thing to do. She wrote many books, and many articles for magazines. "If I had three days to see." Was one of her most popular magazine articles. Happily she wrote that she would see the faces of her family, go for long walks in the woods, see the sunset, see her house, friends, dogs, moon, sun, and stars. Being as busy as she was, Helen would not except that she was getting extremely old. She was eighty-seven. She was determined she was not going to stop and get old, since there was too much work to do. Despite her protest, it happened. "Why do I have to age" was the only thing she thought to herself. On June first, 1960, Helen died at 3:35 pm, it was a painless quick death that happened in her sleep. Helen Keller defiantly lived her whole life to the fullest.

Helen had a very interesting childhood. Born in Tuscumbia, Alabama, she had pretty, curly blonde hair. The outside of Helen was as pretty as could be but the inside of her was full of anger. Unfortunately, Helen could not run and play with other kids, or see the sun that she could feel on her face. She could feel the animals but she could not hear

them, which led to anger. All this because of one incident, Scarlet Fever. It changed her life dramatically. Surprising Helen very much, Annie Sullivan then entered her life, and changed it wonderfully, although it was a long process. Even though blind and deaf, she still found a way to keep up with everyone else. Being as intelligent as she was, Helen learned both sign language and Braille in a fairly short time period, and then wrote stories, reports, books and articles. Truly, the most significant thing about Helen Keller is how she never gave up. She was determined to do everything there was to do, and more. Helen proved that even though you can face many challenges, you can still succeed!

Three Different Classes, One Phylum
Informative Research
Written by a 7th Grade Student

How many species of amphibians are there in the world? There are approximately 4,250 and 40 more are found every year. One animal you should know about are the Poison Dart Frogs, and there are over 100 species. One of these many amphibians is the Golden Poison Dart Frog. It is part of the amphibian's class under the phylum vertebrata. The other classes are reptile, fish, bird, like the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and mammal, for example; the squirrel. All of these classes have something that makes them unique from the other.

The Golden Poison Dart Frog is one amphibian that lives up to its name. It can be recognized by its bright gold like color. Its other well-known colors are yellow, orange, and pale green. It's very small, two inches to be exact. The people of the southern part of Central America and Northern South America, which is where these ectotherms are found, would use the frog's poison for their arrow tips to kill the animal they are hunting quicker. Golden Poison Dart Frogs satisfy their appetites with flies, crickets, ants, termites, and beetles.

One of the smaller birds in Texas is the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This bird is named for its ruby crown, giving the king part of the name, and let, which means small. Tear drop shaped, this bird can be the color of grey or green. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet has white wing bars. They also have the same color ring around the bird's eyes. The bird can often be found in thick shrubs close to the ground. Their closeness to the ground helps them find their meals, mainly insects and berries. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet can even be found in your front yard, just check your shrubs.

The squirrel is a mammal that everyone has most likely seen. It is a small creature, with brown or gray fur. One way to recognize it is by its large, bushy tail. Squirrels live in trees or ground burrows. If you go to a public park, you will be able to spot them climbing up a large tree. Nuts are the squirrel's most commonly known food, but it does eat other things as well. Leaves, roots, seeds, and other plants are often what squirrels fill their appetites with. Squirrels can be found pretty much anywhere you go.

Some of the most exotic endotherms can be found in your backyard; the squirrel or ruby –crowned kinglet. Some can be found in other parts of the world, for example, the Golden Poison Dart Frog. From different food, to location, to class, they all have one thing in common. They are God's marvelous creations. He thought of each one of their designs and used his creativity to create them and the rest of the animals on this planet.

Causes of the Civil War
Information Research
Written by an 8th Grader

Our country is called the United States of America, but we were not always united. There was a time when we were at war with each other. It was called the Civil War. It had many causes that started it. The three main causes were sectionalism, slavery and the election of Abraham Lincoln.

The growth of sectionalism throughout the Union was one of the many causes of the Civil War. Sectionalism is loyalty to a region rather than a country. Among the regional concerns that arose was the issue of federal vs. states' rights. The North wanted a strong federal government, while the South desired more states' rights. In addition, the economies of the North and the South were quite different. The North's economy was based on factories and manufacturing, while the South's was mainly agricultural with its small farms and plantations. Also, the matter of internal improvements helped sectionalism grow because the South believed that the building of roads and canals using federal, state and private funding would not benefit them, but would help the North. Finally, slavery with its strong supporters in the South was the main issue leading to sectionalism. All of these differences between regions of the United States led to the growth of sectionalism.

Life as a slave was not easy. It was hard and painful with little food and no freedom. Slaves' view of slavery was very different from that of the owners'. On one hand, slaves thought it was unfair, unjust and horrible, while the owners thought it was necessary because they needed the slaves to work their land. A major argument that arose between the North and the South was what to do if the slaves were freed, since slavery

for the South increased its profits. The North's view of slavery was that it needed to end and this is why the South referred to people of the North as abolitionists. This disagreement spread to the new Western states seeking statehood. The North thought that these new states should be free, while the South wanted them to be slave states. The Missouri Compromise settled this dispute. The North and South had different ideas about slavery which helped lead to the Civil War.

The election of Abraham Lincoln as President was the last straw for the divided country. Lincoln, having been in politics only briefly, was still elected President because the more populated North supported him. He received more electoral votes than the other candidates running for office, but he was not the favorite choice. Being outspoken against slavery, Lincoln was loved by the North, but hated by the South. His vision to unite the country and make it one was supported in the North, but rejected in the South. Just after his election South Carolina seceded from the Union, and even before he was inaugurated seven more southern states resigned. Lincoln's election as President pushed the country to the brink of war.

Sectionalism, slavery and the election of Abraham Lincoln all helped lead the nation to civil war. The most significant cause of the Civil War was the issue of slavery because there were many feelings, emotions and points of view associated with it that severely divided the country. Once divided the Union of States had only one choice to reunite...to go to war.

The Adventures of a Water Molecule
Narrative
Written by a 6th Grade Student

I am water molecule. Right now I am in a cloud high above the Earth. I travel around the Earth all the time along with thousands of other water molecules. We evaporate, condense, and form clouds, fall to the earth, and then travel back up again to the atmosphere. I've been in captivating waterfalls, endless oceans, crystal clear pools, and more. It's extremely exciting; we've seen more of the world than most humans.

It is starting to rain so I will start falling soon. Because I am a water molecule, I fall to the Earth as precipitation along with thousands of other water molecules. Here I go! I fall from over six thousand feet in the air. You can see so much from up here, fields, ponds, lakes, towns, and more. I am approaching the ground now, and I, the brave water molecule, have landed on a flower. It looks like a rose but I'm not a flower expert. It feels like I'm slipping; now I am dropping into a stream. I have never been in this stream before. Looks like I'm off on a new adventure!

There seems to be a building at the end of this stream. I wonder what it is. There is a sign by the side of the stream and it says, "Water Treatment Plant". That is the place all water molecules fear! I have heard that it is extremely scary. I'm now entering the plant, and it is huge. I can't see much because it is so dark, but I can see hundreds of pipes and gigantic tubs of boiling water. I have never been boiled before and it looks terrifying. Now it feels like I am being sucked into a black hole, I can't see where I am heading and I can't escape. Up ahead I can now see light. Finally, I am exiting the plant; it was the most terrifying time of my life.

The air around me is starting to become cold. I am now in a refrigerator water dispenser that is filled by a pipe leading out of the treatment plant. The wall under me is opening and I am being poured into a cup. That means one thing: I am going to be drunk by a human! The human is lifting the cup to his mouth. This is even worse than the treatment plant.

I am about to enter the mouth of the human when all of a sudden I wake up. I am no longer a water molecule; I am a human. I have to tell myself multiple times that it was only a dream, but it seemed so real. Then I remember the water molecule project I still need to complete for science.

I am still overcoming the shock of waking up. That has been the most vivid dream I have ever had. As I sit down at my desk, I think to myself how glad I am that I was not created as a water molecule.

Friends Forevermore
Narrative
Written by a 7th Grade Student

In the deep dark depths of Disaster Cove, a deadly white pointer, who was tangled in a treacherous fishing line, was desperately thrashing about attempting to untangle himself, but was only succeeding in making the situation worse. Fortunately, there was a crab nearby who was wondering what all the racket was about, so he promptly set off in the direction of the noise. When he found the shark, he gasped because there before him was the most vile looking hideous thing that the poor old crab had ever seen! The shark begged the crab to help. The crab, although scared, bravely scuttled forward and gently snipped the line off the shark using his razor sharp pincers. The shark was grateful and thanked the crab with a tear in his eye and swam off.

A few months later, our heroic crab was scrambling over some gnarly rocks when he saw something of interest to him. Suddenly the ground shifted under him and he was lifted and lifted until he was nearing the surface. “I’m in a net!” he cried. Eventually he remembered how he had saved the shark by cutting the tangled net. However, although he tried vigorously to snip the net, his attempt failed miserably because this net was much thicker. “What am I going to do?” The thought was spinning and churning within his crablike head.

Meanwhile, the shark had been successful in achieving an incident-free life after being saved. Fortunately, he had never forgotten the crab’s kindness. The shark at that particular moment was very, very, very hungry! He carefully maneuvered around a blob of jellyfish and there before him was the most wonderful sight of sights that a hungry shark could ever find! There before him was a net full of plump fish and a delectable

crab, which was his favorite meal! He circled the net greedily, and suddenly stopped short, because there was the crab that had rescued him all those months ago. Without thinking he dove head first into the rather, difficult to break net. He actually managed to penetrate the net, since he used the full force of his huge body weight. Sadly the shark's dinner had now swum away but the shark felt ecstatic at having repaid the crab's kindness. The crab however, who had plummeted to the seabed, was in a state of shock. Fortunately, since he had quite a hard shell, it did not hurt. The shark swam down, and the crab thanked him greatly and then scuttled away. The crab and the shark have been friends forevermore.

How do I Trust Him?
Narrative
Written by an 8th Grade Student

Have you ever pondered, “How do I trust God?” I asked myself that same question a few months ago. While I was sitting in youth group at church, the middle school youth leaders, Chad and Hannah, were talking about placing all of our faith and trust in the Lord. At first, I blew it off as nothing thinking, “Of course I trust God, he has blessed me with everything I have, so there is no reason to be suspicious.” As I sat there, I realized I might not trust him as fervently as I should. After youth group I prayed for God to guide me in how to find faith in him. Then life went back to normal. My Sunday’s were average as I hung out with friends, went to worship services, and listened to my dad preach. Then the elders announced that we would have a meeting about constructing a new building for the church the following week. As church dismissed all the chatter was centered on this incredible new place to worship.

Weeks passed, and life kept improving. I began planning to travel to Ethiopia on a mission trip; and the plans for the building were in full swing. I made new friends at school like a wonderful girl named Katie and chatted with my best friend Kalley nonstop. Singing at youth on Wednesdays was a source of extreme happiness for me. Doing all of this caused me to completely forget about the whole “trusting God” thing; besides, I had nothing to worry about. I had friends, I had good grades, I had an amazing church family, and I lived in a beautiful home with the room of my dreams; everything felt perfect. I was immune to the details going on behind the scenes, those things that threatened that “perfect” existence. Unbeknownst to me there were a few important people in the life of the church were becoming angry with my father. I never heard of

their plans for the next step in the life of the church, plans that would shake my world like never before and alter my life forever.

Those plans all fell into place that Sunday night. I was working on completing some weekend homework with my mom when my dad strolled into the room as if he were in a daze after an elder meeting. He glanced at my mom looking conflicted. She questioned him, “What?” He just nodded his head. “We need to talk!” she exclaimed as heat gleamed on her face and terror poured out of her eyes. They rushed into their room. Fear gripped me as I realized something was about to change. My initial thought was that someone had passed, that was the only time I had ever seen that expression on my mom’s face before. They entered the room and my mom looked as though she were going to break down any second. Calling down my brother and sister, they sat us all on the couch. My dad looked at each of us gravely and stated, “At the elder meeting tonight they asked Daddy to resign as pastor of First Baptist.” Tears erupted from eyes as clamped my mouth closed attempting to muffle the grieving screams issuing from my throat. I could not control the emotions flooding my body. I just continued bawling uncontrollably. Feeling broken and abandoned I wailed at the top of my lungs. I felt as though my family in Christ had disowned me. My dad had done nothing sinful yet still these people that we cherished unconditionally forced us out of their lives. The tears flowed down my face as I shook and yelped until the tears could no longer come and my voice was hoarse. Our close friends arrived at our house to comfort us; but the pain was not going away any time soon.

I was supposed to leave for a school camp the next day but I was unsure if I could handle being away from my family. There was something inside me, however, that told

me this camp would play an important role in my grieving process. While at camp I longed to cry the majority of the time; but I took refuge in friends like Katie (who I was given permission to tell about what I was going through), and Kalley, who texted me in constant support. Even in the midst of my grieving I have to admit that I had many times of incredible fun and great learning. I could have sat at home pouting, but instead the Lord used camp to remind me that I can trust Him.

Weeks passed and I continued to feel broken, longing to know God's plan, I just wanted order in my life! I yearned for control. Unable to handle my extreme emotions I was even forced to leave school one day. After much searching, we got a call from Wamahuchie Community Church. They wanted my dad to become the pastor! It was an incredible blessing from the Father! It was closer to our school and out in the country right where we had always wanted to live. My family prayed for only two days before we were positive that we were called to move to Wamahuchie. Our house sold the first day on the market and we received our country dream home in Wamahuchie.

Everything fell completely into place. We are entering our second month at Wamahuchie Community Church and finally feel as though we are loved again. I hide in my heart the incredible amount of love that my friends gave me at my breaking point. And on top of all of these things I finally feel like my life is under control again. Everything I would have described as wonderful before feels as though it has been multiplied by ten. I am closer to the Lord and I am more capable and ecstatic to complete his will than ever before. Although the road has been excruciatingly long I feel as though I am correctly equipped to continue on that walk towards God's will for my life.

I finally know what it really means to fully rely on God and trust him wholeheartedly. He provided for the church, even though they fired my dad, through blessing them with an incredible new pastor and the new building was pursued. Enveloped in joy I was finally released from that brutal pain and grief. I was healed! I trusted people again and forgave the ones that hurt me. My friends were all real friends that truly loved me. And, above all I found my trust in God. Never again will I ask myself “Do I trust him?” because I am positive he has a brilliant plan. I put all trust in the Lord My God, do you?

Ephesians
Biblical Analysis
Written by a 7th Grader

The church of Ephesus was the only church Paul wrote to that he did not address a certain problem the people had. You may know this letter as the book of Ephesians in the New Testament. During Paul's time in prison, about 60 A. D. in Rome, he had many different representatives from different churches come and visit him. One of them was Tychicus from Ephesus, Turkey, and he brought Paul's letter to the people of the church. Since the Ephesians had no specific problems, Paul wrote to them about three major themes, which were having a new life in Christ, uniting as one body, and continuing to grow more spiritually mature.

It is important that when we accept Christ into our hearts, we get rid of the old, sinful life we've been living and live a new, cleaner life, though we are still not expected to be perfect. Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24, "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." We must attempt to be like our holy father in heaven. We will always sin, but we can try to be like God. If you do let the devil have a little of you when you sin and feel proud of it, he will take much more than you give him (Ephesians 4:27). If the devil takes hold of you, you will no longer be like the Lord. The Ephesians are constantly told to encourage each other, to build one another up. Do not criticize your brother if he wrongs you or another. Instead, help him to do better than he has been doing. The problem with the human race is that we do not like to

admit our sins. We wish to be perfect and acknowledging we sin is saying that we are not perfect, but that is what God calls us to do in our new life.

The body of Christ must be unified if it is to stand. We need to support and encourage each other in our next steps with Christ. Ephesians 4 states that we are the body of Christ and that we must support one another, or else we will all come tumbling down. (There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; [New International Version, Ephesians 4:4]) Many times in Ephesians 4, Paul tells the church of Ephesus to speak kindly to and of one another. We want to encourage them in their walk with God, not break them down to make ourselves feel better. If you cheer up a friend and they smile, doesn't it make you feel better, too? We should not sleep while there is still anger in our hearts. Instead, talk to the person of whom you are holding a grudge and make up with them so that you do not go to bed with feelings of remorse or understanding instead of hatred. Every believer needs this kind of support, though many believers think they do not need it. Too many people today say, "I am a Christian, but I don't need a church." They do need the support that a church can give them. So many believers who say this do not keep up with their relationship with God as well as they would in a church. Churches need to unify under Christ to spread the gospel.

Spiritual maturity is not like normal human maturity. There are different levels of maturity, infant, child, youth, and parent. In spiritual maturity, you can be a spiritual parent and fall back to being a spiritual child. We must all strive for the highest level of spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:16). The lower on the spiritual maturity ladder, the easier it is for the devil to grab hold of you. If you give the devil an inch of you, he will take a

mile. Guard your heart against such attacks from the doer of destruction. Many actions can help you grow or shrink spiritually. When we speak the truth in love, we grow closer toward God. The role of a spiritual parent is not only to be growing in their own faith, but helping and encouraging others to do the same (Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of his head, that is, Christ.[Ephesians 4:15]). The body of Christ is one and if you help each other grow in faith and trust with God, the entire body of the church will grow stronger and come closer to Christ. Spiritual infants believe that they are Christians, but they don't need a church home or family like the Bible clearly states multiple times. A spiritual child believes that everything is about them and their comforts. Many believers want to stay in these two stages of maturity, for these are the stages of comfort for them, it is all about them. That is not what we are called to do. We should not just sit back and watch the rest of the world go by. The Bible tells us to proceed into the world spread the good news of the gospel and making disciples, and the more spiritually mature you are, the more capable of this you will be.

The writer of Ephesians does a splendid job of getting through the three major themes of his letter. Paul emphasizes the importance of a new life in Christ, unity within the church, and that we must grow spiritually mature to be closer to God in Ephesians 4 alone. If there is one thing you should learn from this passage of scripture, it is that what others think about your new life in Christ is not important; it is God opinion that matters most. He is the one you are living this life for so shouldn't his opinion be the top priority. Others may think you are a hypocrite and turn away from you because of it, but

God knows that everyone messes up and he will forgive you, no matter what. Your new life in Christ is between you and Christ, his opinion should matter most.

Philippians
Biblical Analysis
Written by an 8th Grade Student

The book of Philippians is found in the New Testament of the Bible. This book was written as a letter to the church of Philippi by Paul. He wrote this informative message in approximately A.D. 60-62 while he was imprisoned in Rome. The letter gave the Philippians many topics and themes on which to base their church and lives.

The importance of pushing away from the past and moving toward a greater goal is highly prominent in Philippians 3. “Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead.” (Phil 4:13) This verse comes directly after Paul has talked about following God’s plan for him. He is speaking of the difficulties of life but the need to push towards the goal that God had planned for him. He pushed towards the goal of Christ on his life with extreme determination. John Courson said on page 1285 of his commentary that, “Some people are always looking back.” This quote speaks of how some people hang on to their past and allow it to deeply affect them mentally. We are called to refuse to allow the past to grasp us but continue on as God has called us to be. “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (Phil 3:12) In this verse Paul speaks of the difficulty that is involved when trying to complete God’s call. Satan throws trials at you in every way but, we cannot be hindered. Our goals cannot be cut short by dwelling on the past. “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.” (Isa 43:18-19) God has a plan and it is not our job to doubt or whine but to

complete his plan. “In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day- for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!” (Luke 13:33) God has a plan, he will protect you and be there for you; you just must obey.

Another prominent theme throughout Philippians is the idea of replacing worry. We are called by God to replace worry with trust, focus, and rejoicing in him! “Do not be anxious about anything,” (Phil 4:6a). We cannot allow ourselves to worry and become impatient. God is there watching over us so that there is no need for worldly nerves. Our trust and praise should be constantly centered on the Lord. “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice!” (Phil 4:4) Our problems are no match for God so instead of whining and worrying we should rejoice in his power and protection. We as Christians have the ability through God’s provision to be joyful in all times. We cannot allow the hard times to bring us down. “Joy should not be hindered by any affliction the wicked imagine and work against them.” (Biblestudy.com) God gives us joy when we ask for it. So, rather than wallowing in self-pity we should find our peace with Christ. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding ;”(Prov 3:5). This verse tells us that we cannot make ourselves better or choose our own path. Only God can heal us and create our paths. We must trust him to do his work. “But in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Phil 4:6b) When we pray we must thank God for his provisions. We may also allow God to hear our heart asking him for help in everything we need. We must trust God and focus on God in everything we need. We should praise him constantly.

The weight of having faith in the good times and bad because God empowers us to do all things is also prominent throughout Philippians. “I know what it is to be in

need, and I know what it is to have plenty I have learned the secret to being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” (Phil 4:12) In anything you go through there is always a light. God has given us the ability to have joy in any trial no matter the level of difficulty. “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Phil 4:13) God has blessed us and is capable of anything. When the trials feel impossible he is there holding out joy for the taking. On page 1293 of his application commentary John Coursen says it this way, “‘The Lord is with me,’ says Paul, ‘and I can do everything in him including being content in the situation I’m in.’ Either we believe that or we don’t the choice is ours.” God gives us the full ability to find faith. All we must do is put behind our worldly ideas of doing it ourselves and trust the Lord with our lives. The Lord wants greatness for us and has amazing plans for us that he empowers us to complete. “Listen my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him?” (James 2:5) Faith is extremely important to God. He wants us to pursue that faith against all odds and find comfort in him. We must also find contentment in him and everything he has given us. “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5) God has a plan for us that he has enabled us to complete. We should not plead with him for any more than that precious gift. Also, we should have faith in the Lord and not whine but thank him for his master plan. Whether the situation is good or bad, have faith and know that you can do anything through Christ Jesus.

Paul had time to think on many things and teach many people how to live while in prison. He taught the church at Philippi to forget the past and move on to a greater goal, to replace worry by trusting, focusing, and rejoicing in God, and to have faith in the good times and bad because you can do anything through Christ. I am really bad about worrying too much or feeling that I can fix the problem myself. Paul's letter has displayed for me the importance of getting rid of those concerns. I cannot do it myself. I need God in my life showing me the way. He helps me press on towards my goals in missions. He even gave me the ability to go to Bolivia this summer! I could accomplish nothing without God.