

WRITING WITH EASE, REVISED EDITION

Level Three

part of *The Complete Writer*

STUDENT WORKBOOK

By

*Susan Wise Bauer
and Susanna Jarrett*



18021 The Glebe Lane
Charles City, VA 23030
www.welltrainedmind.com

“The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean”

by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

This story is a very old fairy tale, written down almost two hundred years ago by two brothers named Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm who wanted to collect ancient stories and keep them alive.

In a village there lived a poor old woman, who had gathered together a dish of beans and wanted to cook them. So she made a fire on her hearth, and so that it might burn the quicker, she added a handful of straw. When she was emptying the beans into the pan, one dropped without her observing it, and lay on the ground beside a straw, and soon afterwards a burning coal from the fire leapt down to the two.

Then the straw said, “Friends, where do you come from, and how did you get here?”

The coal replied, “I sprang out of the fire, and if I had not escaped by sheer force, my death would have been certain. I would have been burnt to ashes.”

The bean said: “I too have escaped with a whole skin, but if the old woman had got me into the pan, I would have been made into soup without any mercy, like all of the others.”

“Nothing good would have happened to me either!” said the straw. “The old woman has destroyed all my brothers in fire and smoke; she seized sixty of them at once, and took their lives. I luckily slipped through her fingers.”

“But what are we to do now?” said the coal.

“I think,” answered the bean, “that since we have so fortunately escaped death, we should keep together like good companions, and go on a journey to a foreign country.”

The coal and the straw agreed, and the three set out on their way together. Soon, however, they came to a little brook, and as there was no bridge, they did not know how they were to get over it.

The straw said: “I will lay myself straight across, and then you can walk over on me as on a bridge.” So the straw stretched itself from one bank to the other, and the coal tripped quite boldly on to the newly-built bridge. But when she had reached the middle, and heard the water rushing beneath her, she was afraid. She stood still, and did not dare go any farther. The straw began to burn, broke in two pieces, and fell into the stream. The coal slipped after her, hissed when she got into the water, and breathed her last.

The bean, who had prudently stayed behind on the shore, could not but laugh at the event. She was unable to stop, and laughed so heartily that she burst.

It would have been all over with the bean, but by good fortune a tailor, who was travelling in search of work, sat down to rest by the brook. As he had a kind heart, he pulled out his needle and thread, and sewed her together.

The bean thanked him most prettily. And, because the tailor used black thread, all beans since then have a black seam.

—Trans. Edgar Taylor and Marian Edwardes, 1823;
some archaic language has been clarified by Susan Wise Bauer

Date _____

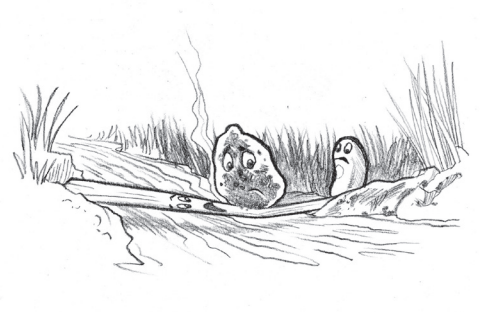
Week 1
Day One

Name _____

Narration Exercise

From “The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean” by the Brothers Grimm

Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the first section of the narration exercise.



Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the second section of the narration exercise.

Date _____

Week 1
Day Two

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated 10 times.

“Cat and Mouse in Partnership”

by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

A cat became friends with a mouse, and the two decided to keep house together.

“We must store up some food for winter,” said the cat. The mouse agreed, and together the two bought a little pot of bacon fat. But they did not know where to put it.

Finally, after much thought, the cat said, “We should store it in the church, for no one dares steal anything from there. We will set it beneath the altar, and not touch it until we are really in need of it.”

So the pot was placed in safety. But it was not long before the cat had a great yearning for it, and said to the mouse: “My cousin has brought a little son into the world. He is white with brown spots, and I must go to the christening.”

“Yes, yes,” answered the mouse, “by all means go.”

But the cat had no cousin. She went straight to the church, stole to the pot, and licked the top of the fat off. Then she took a walk upon the roofs of the town and stretched herself in the sun, and not until it was evening did she return home.

“Well, here you are again,” said the mouse. “What name did they give the child?”

“Top-off,” said the cat quite coolly.

“Top-off!” cried the mouse, “that is a very odd and uncommon name.”

“It is no worse than Crumb-stealer,” said the cat, “which is the name of your own little nephew.”

Before long the cat was seized by another fit of yearning. She said to the mouse: “You must do me a favour, and once more manage the house for a day alone. Another cousin of mine has had a child.”

The good mouse consented, but the cat crept behind the town walls to the church, and devoured half the pot of fat.

When she went home the mouse inquired, “And what was the child named?”

“Half-done,” answered the cat.

“Half-done!” said the mouse. “I’ve never heard such a name in my life!”

The cat’s mouth soon began to water for some more of the fat. “All good things go in threes,” said she. “My third cousin has had a child—a beautiful black kitten with white paws. You will let me go to the christening, won’t you?”

This time, the cat entirely emptied the pot of fat. When she returned home at night, the mouse at once asked what name had been given to the third child.

“It will not please you more than the others,” said the cat. “He is called All-gone.”

“All-gone!” cried the mouse, “that is the strangest name of all!”

After this, no one invited the cat to christenings, but when the winter had come and there was no longer anything to be found outside, the mouse thought of their provision, and said: “Come, cat, we will go and eat our pot of fat—we shall enjoy that.”

“Yes,” answered the cat, “just as much as sticking our tongues out the window.”

They set out on their way. When they arrived, the pot of fat was still in its place, but it was empty.

“Alas!” said the mouse. “Now I see what has happened! You have eaten it all while you were pretending to see your nephews being named! First top-off, then half-done, then—”

“One more word,” cried the cat, “and I will eat you too!”

But “All-gone” was already on the mouse’s lips. She had barely spoken it when the cat sprang on her, seized her, and swallowed her down. In truth, that is the way of the world!

— Trans. Edgar Taylor and Marian Edwardes, 1823;
some archaic language has been clarified by Susan Wise Bauer

Date _____

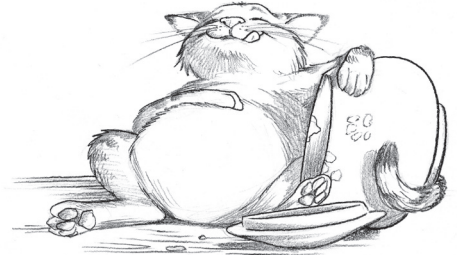
Week 1
Day Three

Name _____

Narration/Dictation Exercise

From “Cat and Mouse in Partnership” by the Brothers Grimm

Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the first section of the exercise.



Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the second section of the exercise.

Week 1
Day Four

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

[illegible]

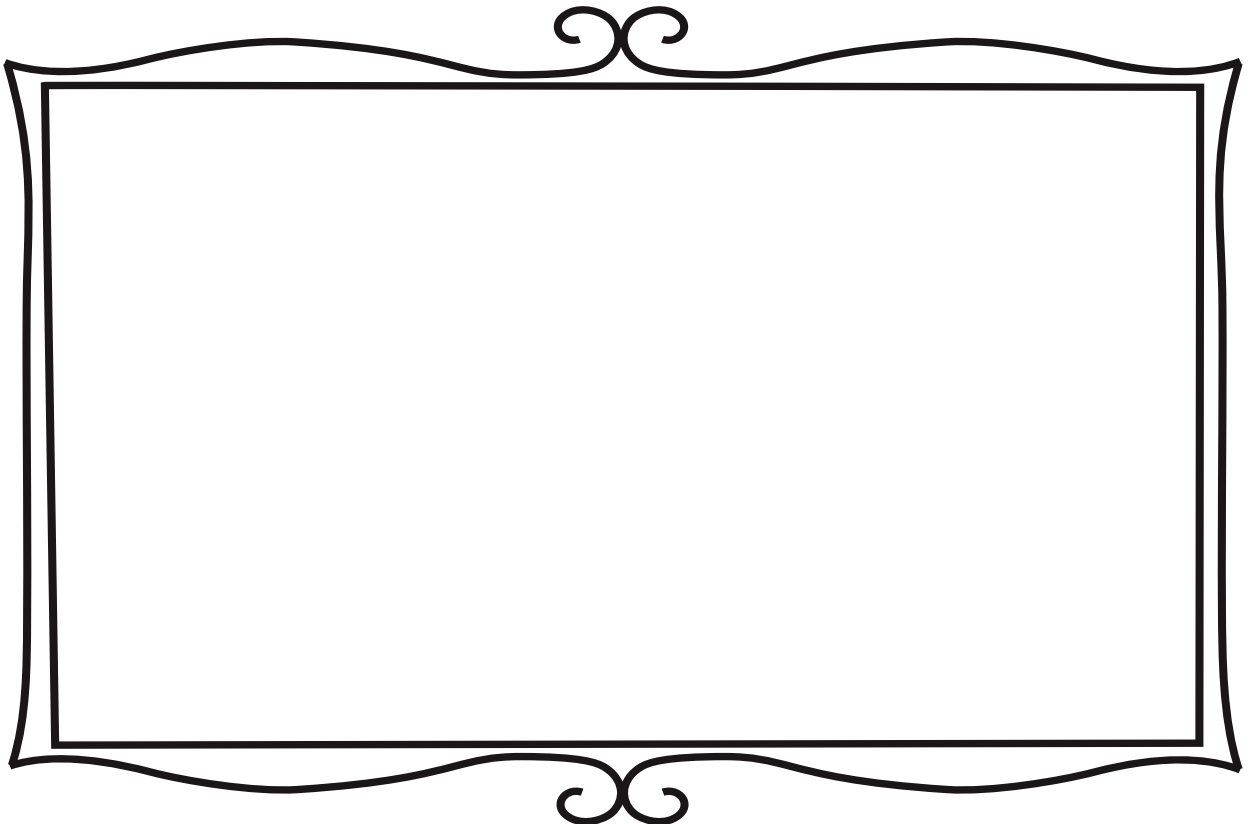
Date _____

Week 1
Day Five

Name _____

Creative Writing

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline for letter height guidance.



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From *Mr. Revere and I*

by Robert Lawson

Mr. Revere and I is a story about the American revolution—told by Paul Revere’s horse, Scheherazade! In the first chapter, we learn that Scheherazade used to be a horse in the British cavalry (mounted soldiers). When British soldiers were sent to the colonies to fight against the American Revolution, Scheherazade and her rider were sent “to occupy the Port of Boston in the Massachusetts Colony” and to help put down the rebellion.

Scheherazade’s rider belonged to a group of soldiers known as the 14th Regiment. All of the horses in the 14th Regiment were put on a ship and sent from England to America. This is Scheherazade’s account of her journey.

Ajax is another horse, a “magnificent charger.” The “artillery horses” were horses that belonged to another military division which was also being sent to America. A “transport” is a ship designed especially to move men and horses from one place to another; a “ship of the line” is a warship with cannons on both sides. To “pipe-clay” a belt meant to clean it with a very fine, white clay that removed dirt and stains from the leather. “Gaols” is an old-fashioned way to spell “jails.” An “Accoutrement” is part of a military uniform that isn’t a weapon—like a belt, or a bag for carrying food.

I will not dwell long on the horrors of that trip. It was my first sea voyage, but Ajax, who had made several, said he had seen worse. What *they* could have been like I cannot imagine, for it is hard to conceive of any voyage being worse than ours.

We were quartered in the hold of an extremely old and leaky vessel misnamed the *Glorious*. There was no light and less air. Our hay was moldy, the grain mildewed and weevily, the water unspeakable. Rats were everywhere; they ate the food from under our very noses, they nibbled at our hoofs, they made sleep impossible. Our stalls were never cleaned, and of course currying and brushing were unheard-of.

Our grooms occupied the deck above us and a worse lot could scarce be imagined. They had been plucked from the gaols and prisons to fill out our ranks and fought and caroused unceasingly. Ajax and I were fortunate, for the thug assigned to us had been in prison for horse stealing, so at least he knew *something* of horses, and we fared a bit better than our less lucky companions.

How we envied the artillery horses who were stabled on the open deck of another transport, the *Unfathomable*! Of course they were exposed to the weather, and three were swept overboard in a storm; but I think I envied those three most of all.

From the conversation of the so-called grooms, we learned the make-up of the rest of the expedition. There were four transports for the troops, whose condition was not much better than ours, except that they were given rum three times a day and were allowed to go on deck now and then, weather permitting. They had to be closely watched, however, for many had shown a most unpatriotic tendency to jump overboard. A very fine ship, the *Thunderous*, was given over entirely to the Officers and their servants; and of course we had an escort of four great ships of the line: the *Implacable*, the *Incapable*, the *Impossible* and the *Implausible*.

Our passage consumed only a little more than one month—remarkably fast, Ajax said, but to me it seemed an endless horror. Had I been capable of any feeling at all I should have rejoiced when, on the last day of September, 1768, the everlasting motion stopped and the roaring of the anchor chains shuddered through the ship. As it was, I was too sick and weary to care. I could not be interested when the grooms stumbled below to throw us our horrid evening meal.

We were anchored in Boston Harbor, I gathered. Tomorrow we would land. All troops to be clean-shaven, belts pipe-clayed, arms and accoutrements polished, uniforms pressed, hair powdered....

There was no mention of us horses.

Date _____

Week 2
Day One

Name _____

Narration Exercise

From *Mr. Revere and I* by Robert Lawson

Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the first section of the narration exercise.



Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for the second section of the narration exercise.

Week 2
Day Two

Week 2
Day Two

Day Two

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

[illegible]

From *The Moffats*

by Eleanor Estes

Boots, a gray kitten who springs happily around on enormous feet, is Jane's favorite kitten, and Jane is desperate to get her. But Jane thinks to herself that she really doesn't deserve Boots. She is feeling guilty because a neighbor gave her money to buy candy earlier in the day, and instead of sharing the money with her sister and brothers, Jane bought herself an ice-cream cone and ate the whole thing herself.

Now just Boots and Mask were left. And Joe and Jane.

"Oh, please let Boots be mine," Jane prayed again and again. "Although of course I know I don't deserve it," she added.

Rufus drew again. This time the name was—Boots.

Boots! The children all cheered lustily. Boots herself seemed full of excitement. All the while the game had been going on, she had been clawing at the soap box and miaowing madly to get out. Now she was out!

"Oh, be mine, be mine," breathed Jane.

"Look at the big toes on her," Joe marveled. "Boy, oh, boy, I hope I win her."

Of course Joe was just as anxious for Boots as Jane was. And why shouldn't he be? Of these four sweet kittens she alone showed marks of personality that lifted her above the usual run of cats and kittens. She paid no attention to Joe or to Jane. Instead she raced madly around the room. She whacked at a tassel that was hanging from the red plush chair. This caused her to lose her balance and she rolled over and over. Up again. She resumed her swift, though wobbly, adventuring through the sitting-room, the new world.

"Oh, pussy, come. Come, pussy," Jane begged.

Boots ran right over to Jane's corner but then, just as she was within a cat's length of her, she backed off to the middle of the room. What a kitten!

"Come, kitty, come, kitty," said Joey in that gentle voice of his that surely Boots would not be able to resist.

Now Boots teetered over towards Joe. She sat down not far from him and stared at him with her big blue eyes. Her little pink tongue was hanging out and she was thoroughly irresistible. Suddenly she began to purr. She was the first one to purr and she sounded like a little engine.

"She's going to Joey," mourned Jane. "Well, of course I don't deserve her."

But at this moment Boots suddenly turned right about again. She jumped wildly into the air a couple of times and then, in a series of little sideways leaps, she landed right in Jane's lap. Tears came into Jane's eyes. "She's mine. She's mine," she cried, burying her nose in Boots' sweet-smelling fur.

So Mask went to Joey and he immediately found many engaging things about this kitten that they had not yet discovered. For instance, he had the longest fur, the prettiest markings, the longest tail, and many other unusual qualities. Moreover he was the smallest of the four and would need special attention.

At this moment Catherine-the-cat came in. She looked around the room disdainfully. Then she jumped into the soap-box and whirrupped for her kittens. Jane gave Boots one last hug. She already loved this little kitten so much it was almost more than she could bear. She put the kitten carefully back into the soap-box as the other children were doing with theirs. And the choosing game was over.

Name _____

Narration/Dictation Exercise

From *The Moffats* by Eleanor Estes



Date _____

Week 14
Day Four

Name _____

Dictation Exercise

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline. There are 10 sets of these lines for dictation practice.

Creative Writing



Names:

Poetry Exercise**“The Listeners”**

by Walter de la Mare

“Is there anybody there?” said the Traveller,	_____
Knocking on the moonlit door;	_____ A _____
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses	_____
Of the forest’s ferny floor:	_____ A _____
And a bird flew up out of the turret,	_____
Above the Traveller’s head:	_____
And he smote upon the door again a second time;	_____
“Is there anybody there?” he said.	_____
But no one descended to the Traveller;	_____
No head from the leaf-fringed sill	_____
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,	_____
Where he stood perplexed and still.	_____
But only a host of phantom listeners	_____
That dwelt in the lone house then	_____
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight	_____
To that voice from the world of men:	_____
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,	_____
That goes down to the empty hall,	_____
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken	_____
By the lonely Traveller’s call.	_____
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,	_____
Their stillness answering his cry,	_____
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,	_____
’Neath the starred and leafy sky;	_____
For he suddenly smote on the door, even	_____
Louder, and lifted his head:—	_____
“Tell them I came, and no one answered,	_____
That I kept my word,” he said.	_____
Never the least stir made the listeners,	_____
Though every word he spake	_____
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house	_____
From the one man left awake:	_____
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,	_____
And the sound of iron on stone,	_____
And how the silence surged softly backward,	_____
When the plunging hoofs were gone.	_____

Week 25
Day Three

Name _____

Narration/Dictation Exercise

From *The Everything Kids' Money Book* by Diane Mayr

