

The purpose of *Wordsmith Craftsman* is to prepare students for college and beyond, with an emphasis on writing and thinking skills that will be useful to them for the rest of their lives. The approach is a bit more structured and serious than the other two books, but still friendly and accessible. High school is the target grade level, but *Wordsmith Craftsman* can also serve as a complete college freshman composition course.

PART ONE: WRITING EVERY DAY

Take a Note

How to make notes to yourself and organize your time

Study Notes and Outlines

The skill of note-taking and why it's important; taking notes from verbal and written sources; outlining

Personal Letters

General outlines for thank-you notes, keeping-in-touch letters (and e-mails), fan letters, letters of support and letters of apology; *do's* and *don't's* for each type

Business letters

Business letter etiquette and form; letters of complaint and request

Summaries

What summaries are and how they are used; how to write a summary

Business Reports

Writing in the business world, e.g. proposals, feasibility studies, market research; how to conceive, organize, and present a plan

PART TWO: LANGUAGE POWER

Paragraphs

Basic principles of the paragraph; four paragraph types; eight models of paragraph organization

Writing Techniques That Really Work!

Using more and better verbs; preferring personal to impersonal forms; being specific; preferring active over passive; showing as preferred to telling; avoiding wordiness and clichés

Steps Toward a Personal Writing Style

Arranging words for emphasis; using transitional words and phrases; "loaded" words and selective detail; honesty in writing

PART THREE: THE ESSAY

Introduction to Essays

Basic essay structure; how to brainstorm ideas to write about; determining an essay topic and defining a thesis

Writing the Essay, Step By Step

The writing process (think, organize, write, evaluate, rewrite)

The Descriptive Essay

Determining a focus; using sensory details

The Narrative Essay

Organizing events in sequence; keeping the focus; writing introductory paragraphs

The Expository Essay

Basic research and sources of information; using oral sources; using personal experience as an expository source (e.g., travel writing)

A Word About Research Papers

Two types of research papers; the most critical step: choosing a workable thesis (Note: *Wordsmith Craftsman* does not contain detailed information on how to write a research paper, but the material on research in the Expository section will give the student a head start in this area.)

The Critical Essay

What "criticism" is, in this context; positive and negative criteria for judging a work; pitfalls of review writing; the difference between a review and a critical essay.

The Art of Persuasion

Three types of assertions and how they are defended; the four elements of persuasion; how to organize an argument; determining common ground; the use and misuse of emotion; writing a strong conclusion

APPENDICES: Forms for note-taking and summary-writing; answers to exercises; expanded Dewey decimal system; summaries of the steps in writing all five essay types; common fallacies of argument