

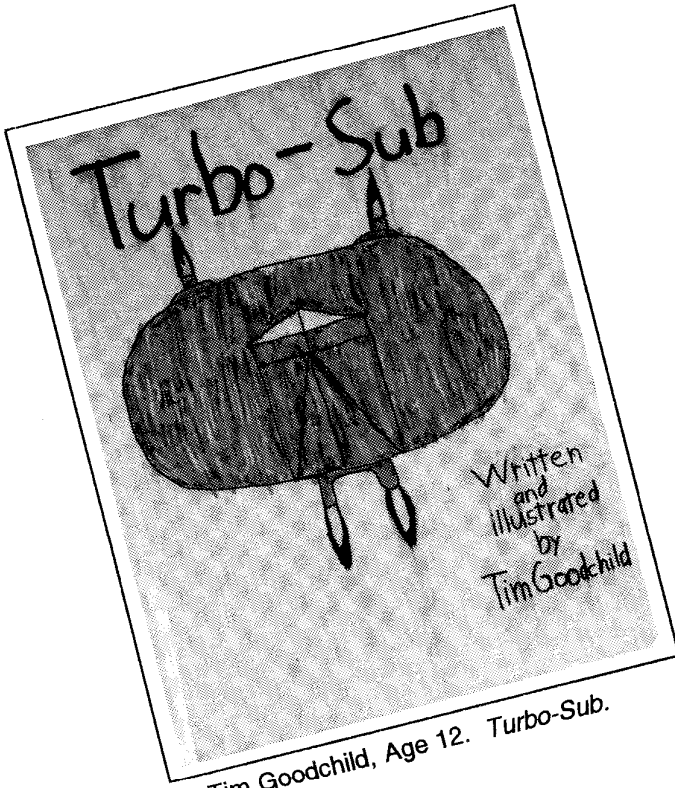
# Creating Books with Children



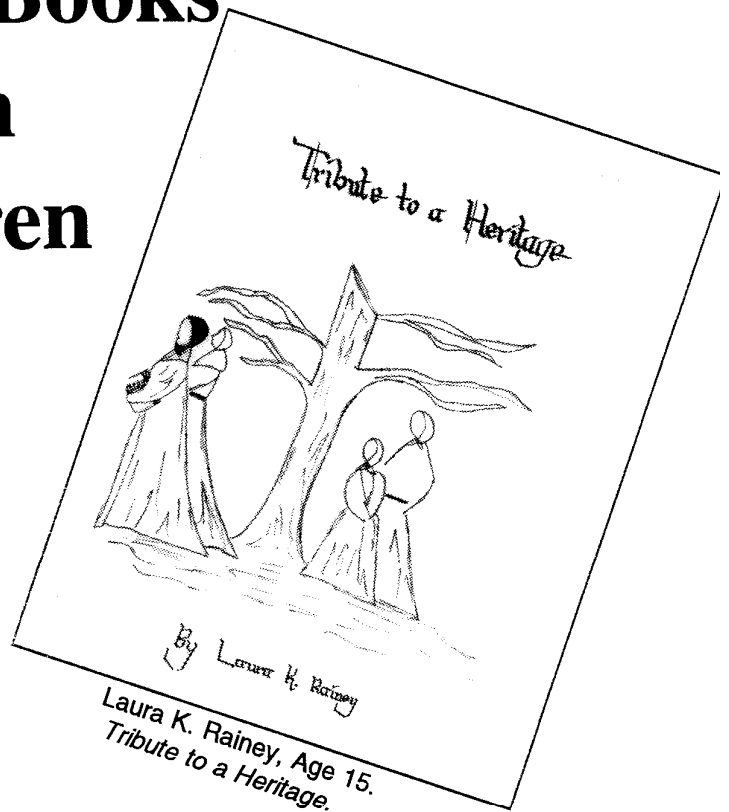
Valerie Bendt



# Creating Books With Children

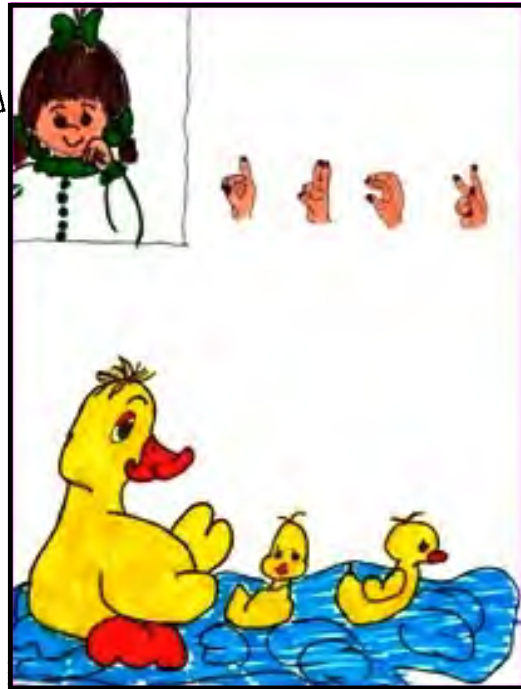


Tim Goodchild, Age 12. Turbo-Sub.



Laura K. Rainey, Age 15.  
Tribute to a Heritage.

by Valerie Bendt



Melissa Bendt, Age 11.  
My Book of Animal Signs.

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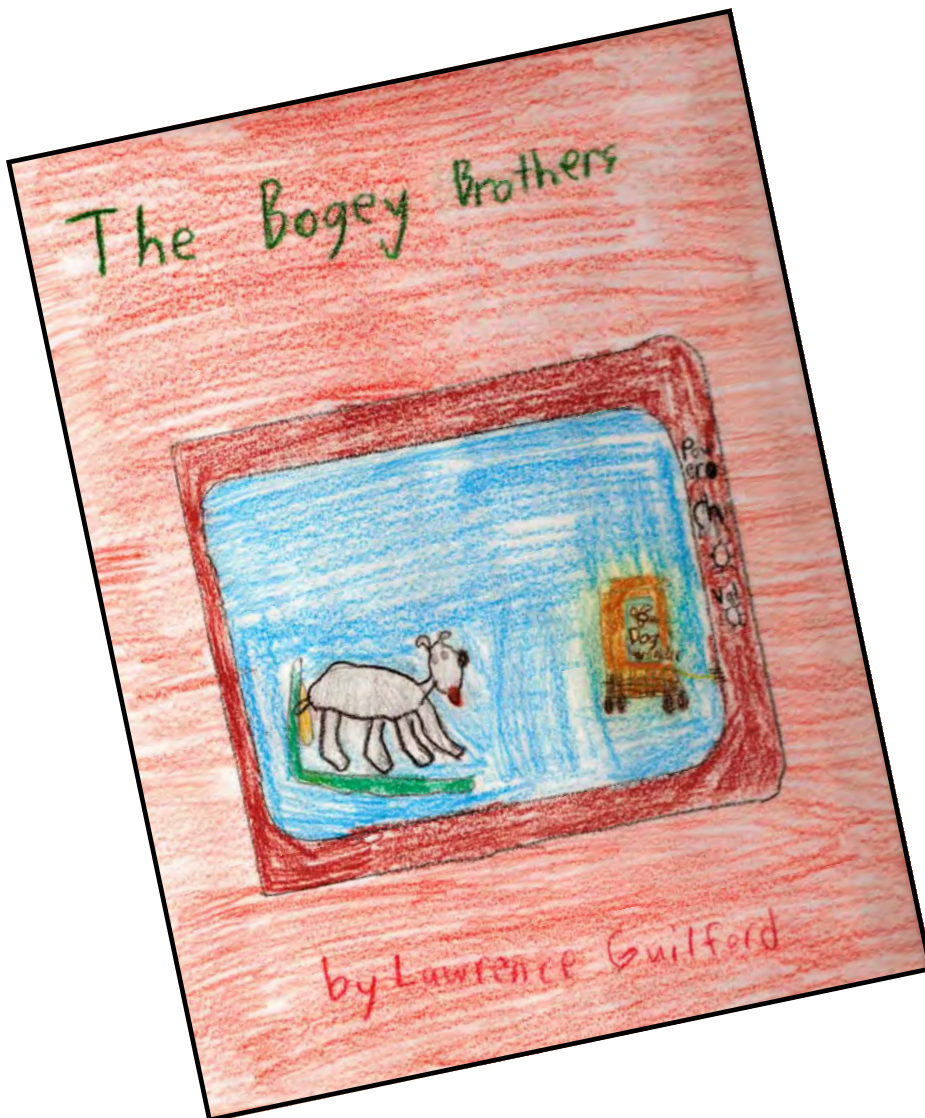
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<http://www.valeriebendt.com/>

# DEDICATION



This book is lovingly dedicated to Lawrence Guilford, 1990-2009. I had the privilege of guiding Lawrence through the bookmaking process when he was 9 years old. Lawrence, may the Lord bless you and keep you in His loving arms.



About the Author

## **Lawrence Guilford**

Lawrence likes to play soccer and baseball. He also likes to watch professional ice hockey. Lawrence plays games on the computer. This is Lawrence's first book. He is nine years old.



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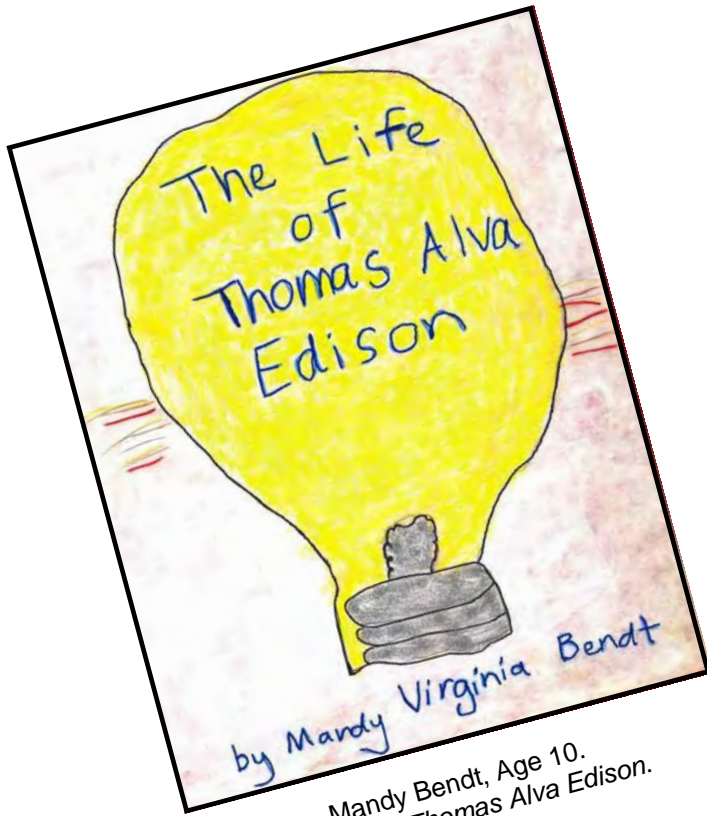
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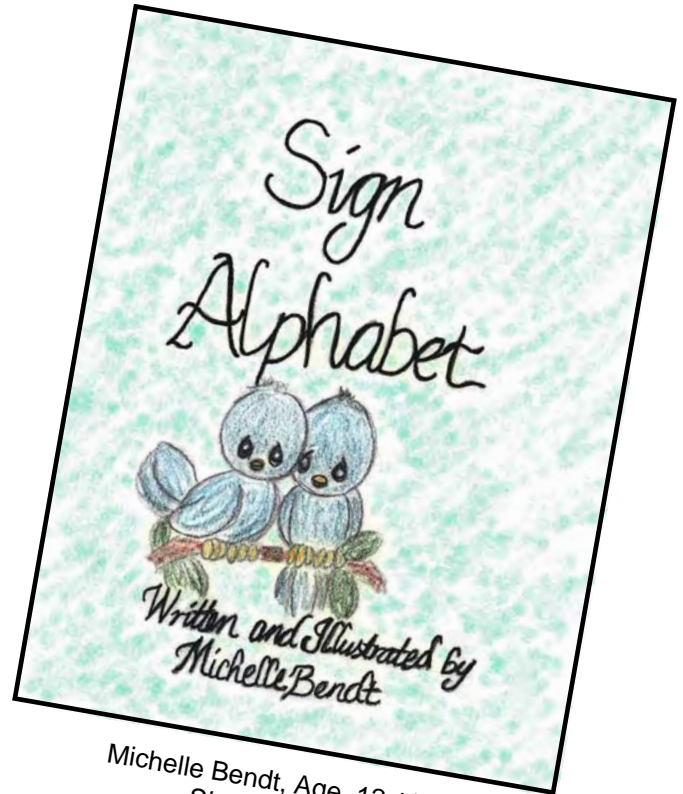
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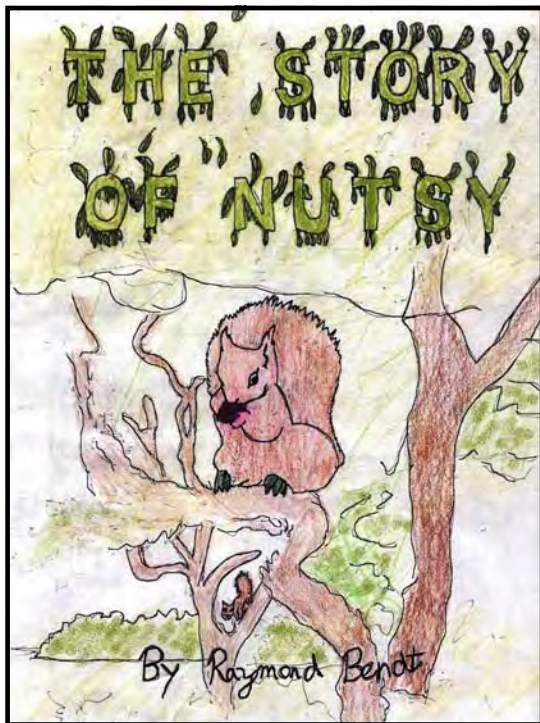
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Mandy Bendt, Age 10.  
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Michelle Bendt, Age 12 1/2.  
Sign Alphabet.



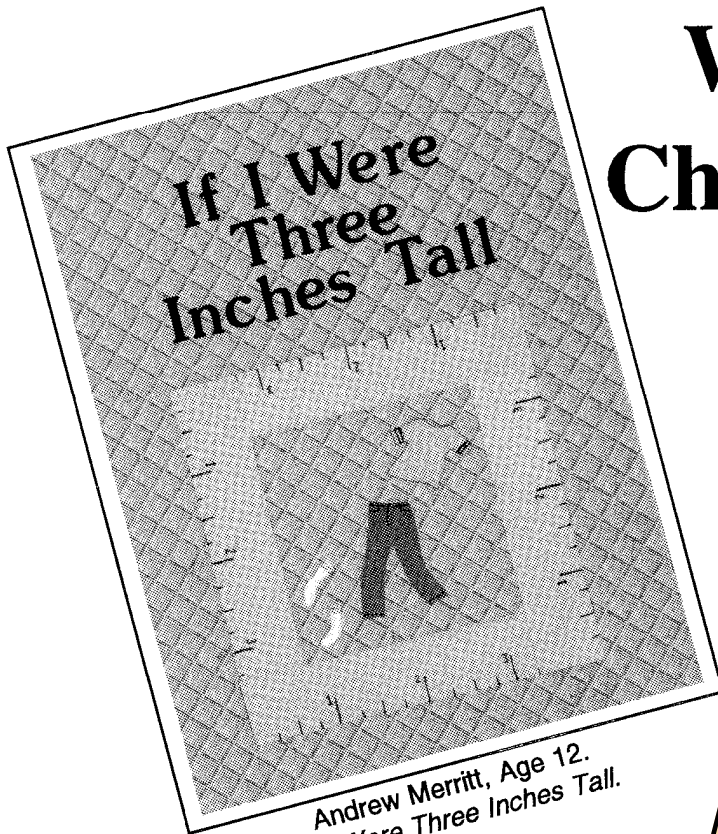
Raymond Bendt, Age 8.  
The Story of Nutsy.



Anthony DeMicco, Age 6.  
My Nursery Rhyme Book.



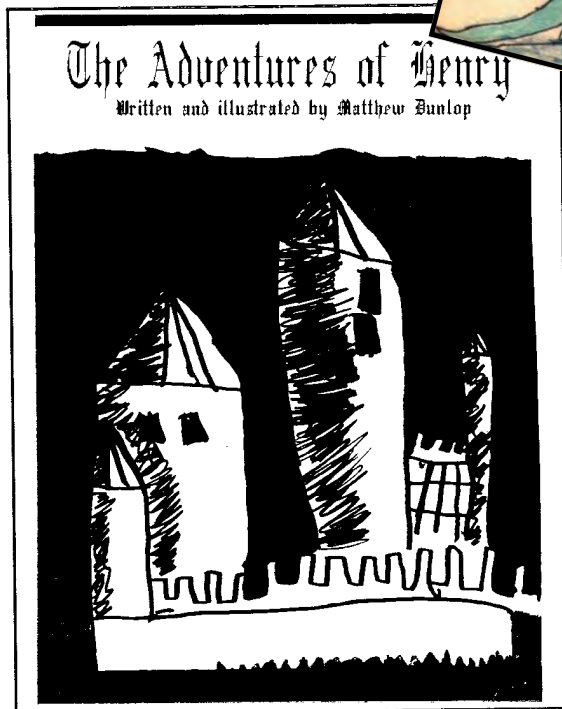
# Creating Books With Children



Andrew Merritt, Age 12.  
*If I Were Three Inches Tall.*



Raymond Bendt, Age 5.  
*The Adventure to the Big Dark Cave.*



Matthew Dunlop, Age 9. *The Adventure of Henry.*

by Valerie Bendt

# INTRODUCTION

**H**ave your children ever made statements regarding their school work like, “why do I have to do this stuff anyway? I’ll never use this. This is just a waste of time!” Not only have my children made similar remarks, but I remember making comparable comments when I was young. Often children do not realize the future benefits of concentrating on specific skills in the present. They get weighed down and disillusioned with the monotony of the daily academic routine.

I feel that unit studies are becoming increasingly popular because basic skills are integrated into a theme or topic, giving cohesiveness and meaning to the children’s studies, rather than compartmentalized into separate unrelated subjects.

Projects are a natural addition to unit studies because they utilize the skills or information acquired to manufacture a tangible product. Many children are product oriented. They need to see a physical representation of their academic pursuits. I’m not advocating that you burden yourself with a multitude of projects but that you select truly beneficial projects that allow your children to produce something worthwhile. Not just another Styrofoam creation to be tossed onto the closet shelf, but something they can hold, feel, use, display, and share.

We have completed a variety of interesting projects throughout our homeschooling years, but creating our own books together has been the most rewarding project we have undertaken. The children produce something representative of their efforts, talents, abilities, and ideas. They know that their books will be read by a number of people. Their books are not going to be stuffed into a folder to be filed away until limited storage space forces us to “clean house.” The children’s books become part of the family archives to be treasured for a lifetime. Just as the family photo album depicts the physical changes in the children from year to year, the children’s books represent the academic and creative progression of the children.

My parents managed to save one piece of my schoolwork from each grade level. I remember looking back on those early papers and thinking how exciting it was to have that record, meager as it was, of my academic childhood. How much better to have an entire book, or two, from each grade level!

For many years now my children have been making books. They enjoy getting their own books from the special shelf in the living room and reading them. They like reading each other’s books as well, and friends are encouraged by reading the children’s books when they visit our home. Even young children can participate in this bookmaking endeavor when they dictate their stories to Mom or Dad. As the children are writing and illustrating books, they are learning about text layout, page sequencing, editing, linguistic skills, artistic expression, book binding and more.

Many parents ask, “But how do I get my children to write?” The key to getting children to write well is to read well-written books. If you need help in locating fine reading material, *Books Children Love* by Elizabeth Wilson and *Honey for a Child’s Heart* by Gladys Hunt are wonderful time-saving guides to the best in children’s literature. It is important that you read aloud to your children on a regular basis. Even children who read well on their own benefit from listening to stories that are read aloud. As you read to your children they are exposed to a variety of people, places, cultures, time periods, political ideas, economic climates, and so forth. Your children are able to interact as you discuss characters, dialogue, setting, scenery, plot, and other details. This immersion in good literature serves as a catalyst to inspire your children’s creativity. While your children are writing their own books, they will suddenly take a deeper interest in the writing styles utilized by other authors. Details will become important to them as they seek to pattern their writing after a well-loved author.

As your children proceed to illustrate their books, they will analyze various layout techniques. They will try their hand at creating pictures to represent their thoughts. If your children need help in the artistic arena, they will benefit from spending a block of time working on the lessons in Mona Brookes’ book *Drawing with Children*. This book offers simple lessons to encourage artistic development, and no drawing ability or experience is necessary to use this book with your children. In *Creating Books with Children*, I also explain the artistic techniques developed by my own children to create impressive illustrations.

I have used a number of helpful guides for making books with my children over the years; however, these books were written for the typical classroom. Many ideas expressed in these books did not suit my situation or educational philosophy. After gleaning ideas from a variety of sources, and from hands-on experience with my children, I have written a book instructing parents how to make treasurable books with their children. I have sought to make the instructions clear and simple while encouraging superior products.

I suggest that you take a generous six weeks to make these books, concentrating primarily on this project and easing up on other studies, thereby providing a stress-free atmosphere conducive to productivity. This book, designed to be used as a guide for conducting a “bookmaking unit study,” offers exposure to a wide spectrum of subject matter.

Visit your local library and select a variety of books and observe all you can with your children. Read some favorites and discuss what makes a good story. Talk about why you do or do not like some books. Help your children to develop an auditory and visual awareness of books. What makes the story sound interesting? What makes the book visually appealing? After you have completed your books, plan a celebration where the young authors can present their books. Check with your neighborhood library to see if you can exhibit the children’s books in a display case. Have fun and happy bookmaking!

# ABOUT THE BOOK

This manual is designed as a six-week course to enable parents to guide their children through the process of creating memorable books that will be treasured for a lifetime.

Just as pictures in a family photo album represent the children's physical appearance at various stages of development, books made by the children represent their thoughts, abilities, and creativity at a particular point in their lives.

The books produced in this course are of a professional, handmade quality. They are hard-bound, hand-sewn, cloth-covered, typed, illustrated in full color, and enveloped in decorative book jackets. The books are 24 pages long and the dimensions are 8 1/2"x11".

Included in this guide are complete instructions and diagrams to lead parents successfully through the bookmaking process. Pages from over 50 books by homeschooled children are reproduced as well to inspire young authors and illustrators. Reluctant children will no longer have reason to say, "I can't write and I can't draw." Instructions are given to accommodate very young authors and illustrators too. This is a project for the entire family to enjoy.

For information about the *Creating Books with Children 2-Disc DVD* set visit:

<http://www.valeriebendt.com/CreatingBooksWithChildrenDvd.aspx>.

The book chapters include:

**Week One:** Pre-Writing Activities

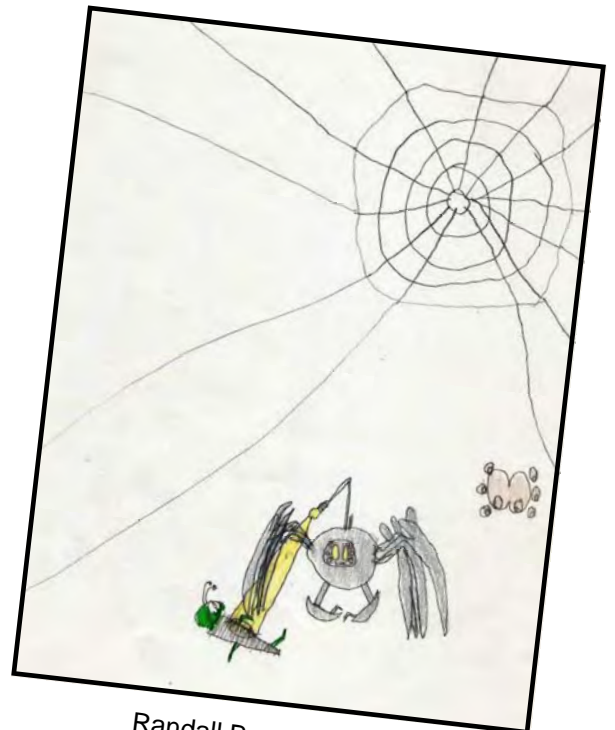
**Week Two:** Writing The Stories

**Week Three:** Text Layout And Editing

**Week Four:** Illustrating The Books

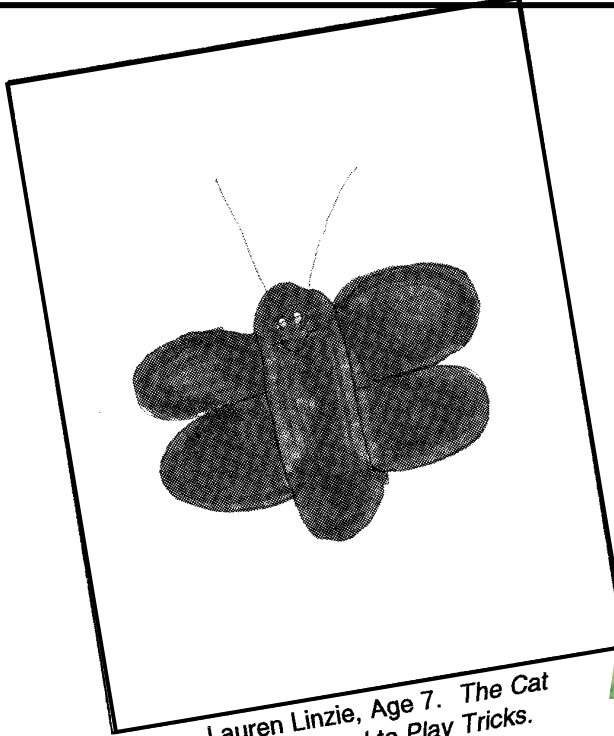
**Week Five:** Developing The Beginning And Ending Pages And The Book Jackets

**Week Six:** Assembling The Books

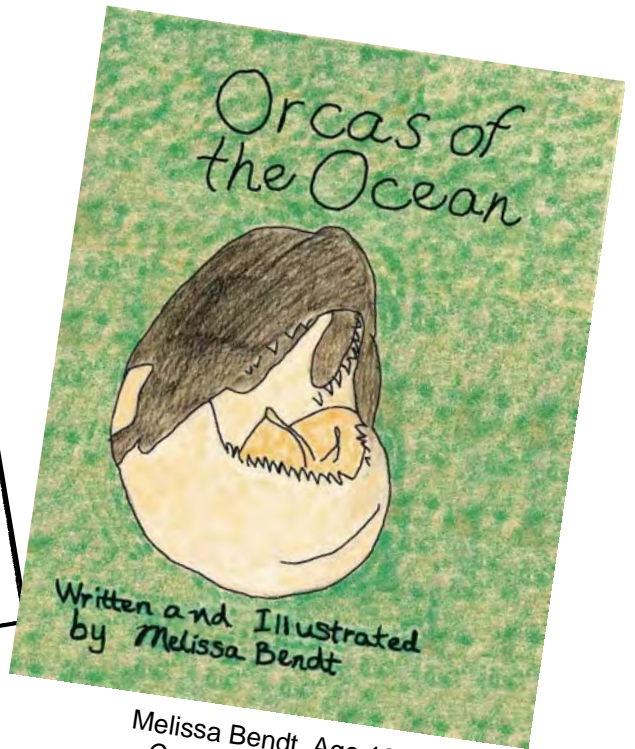


Randall Bendt, Age 10.  
*Spider Spy.*

# W E E K - O N E



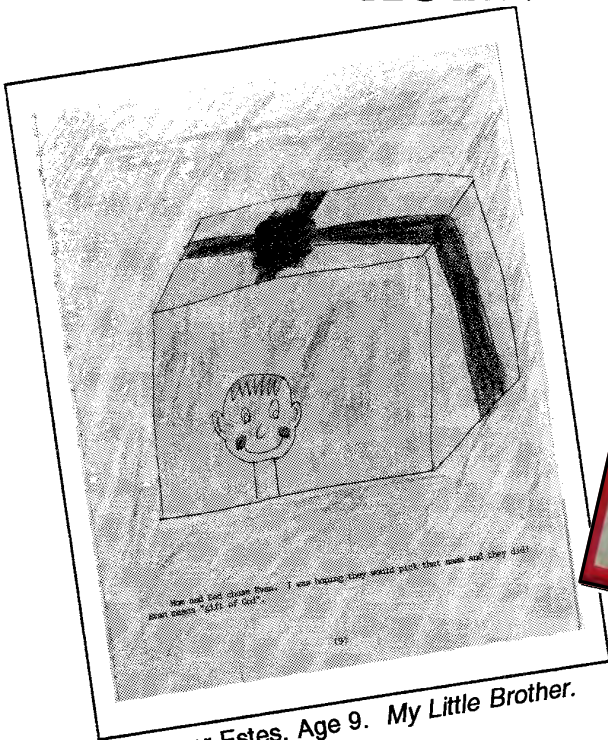
Lauren Linzie, Age 7. The Cat that Liked to Play Tricks.



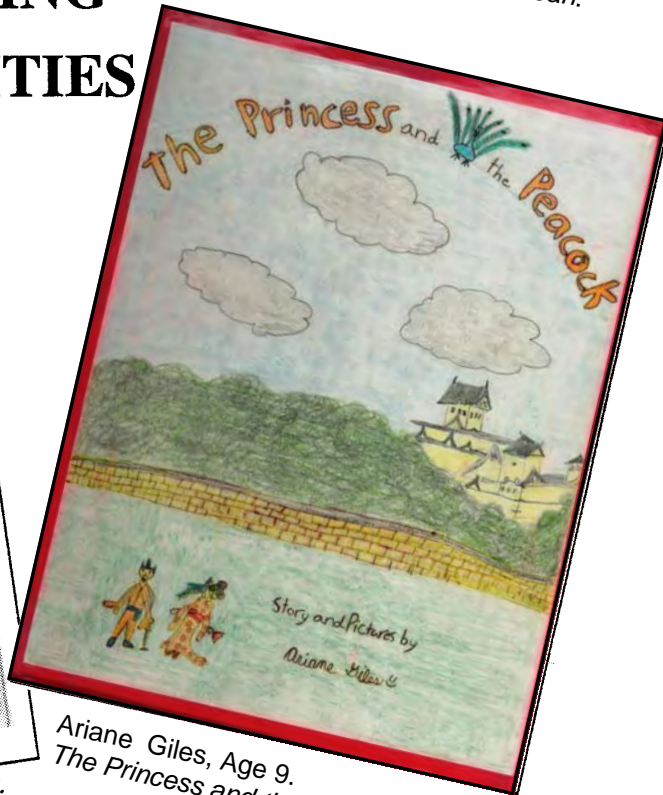
Written and Illustrated by Melissa Bendt

Melissa Bendt, Age 12. Orcas of the Ocean.

## PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES



Ginger Estes, Age 9. My Little Brother.

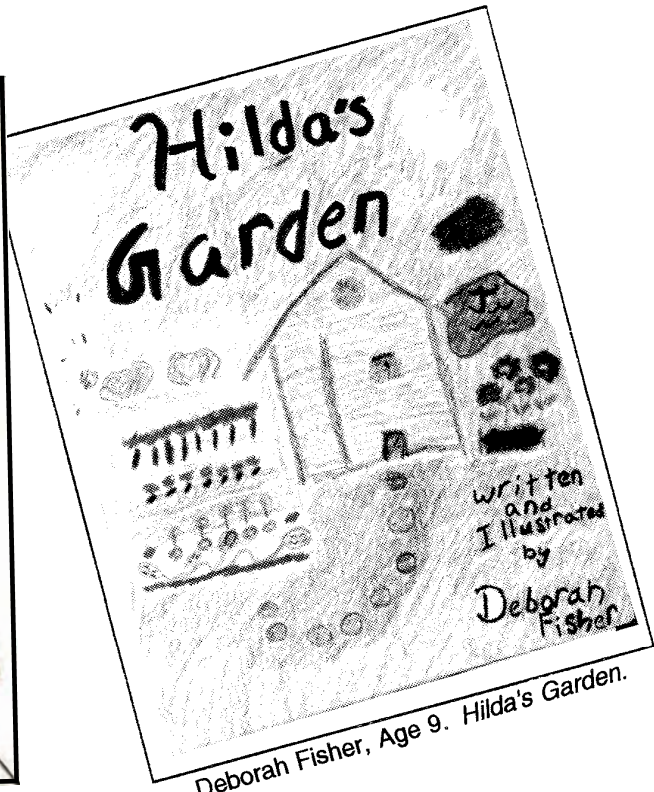


Story and Pictures by Ariane Giles

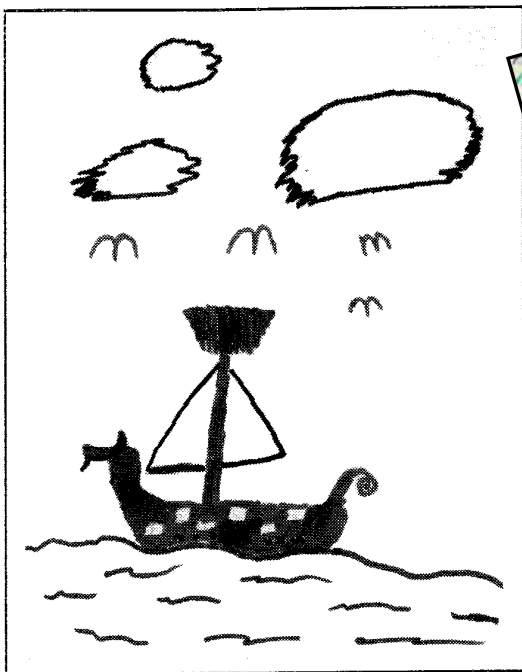
Ariane Giles, Age 9. The Princess and the Peacock.



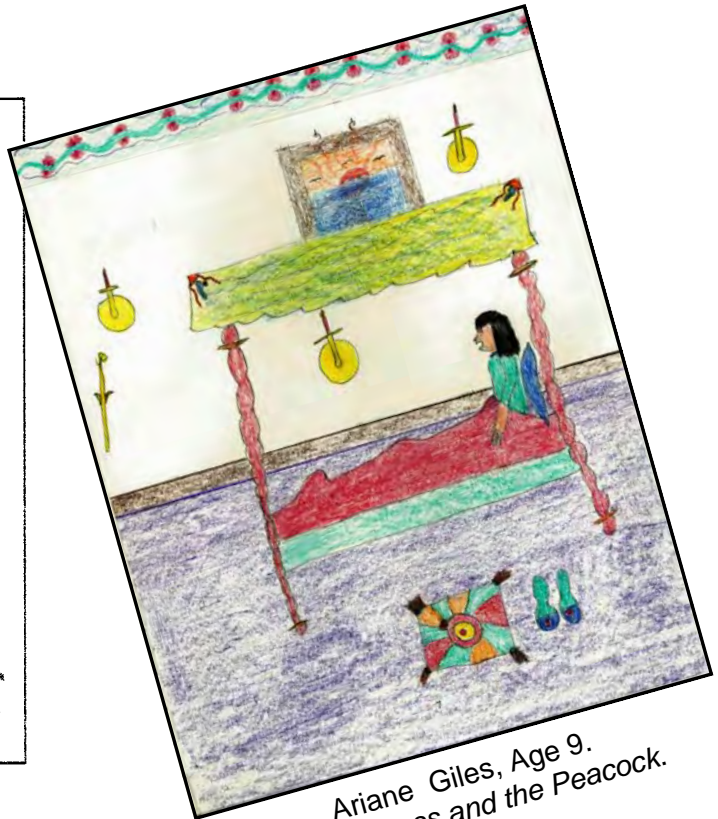
Melissa. Bendt, Age 10.  
*Brittany's Birthday .*



Deborah Fisher, Age 9. Hilda's Garden.



Timothy Welch, Age 8.  
*Four Days on an Island.*



Ariane Giles, Age 9.  
*The Princess and the Peacock.*

# W E E K - O N E

## Pre-Writing Activities

In this chapter you will:

### 1 - **Select And Read Library Books With Your Children.**

You and your children will observe the various writing and artistic styles used in children's books. You will also study one or two biographies of authors of children's books.

### 2 - **Complete Copying And/Or Dictation Exercises.**

Your children will copy and/or dictate passages from their library books that contain key story elements. These will include Passages that Contain Dialogue, Passages that Physically Describe a Character, Passages that Reveal the True Personality of a Character, etc.

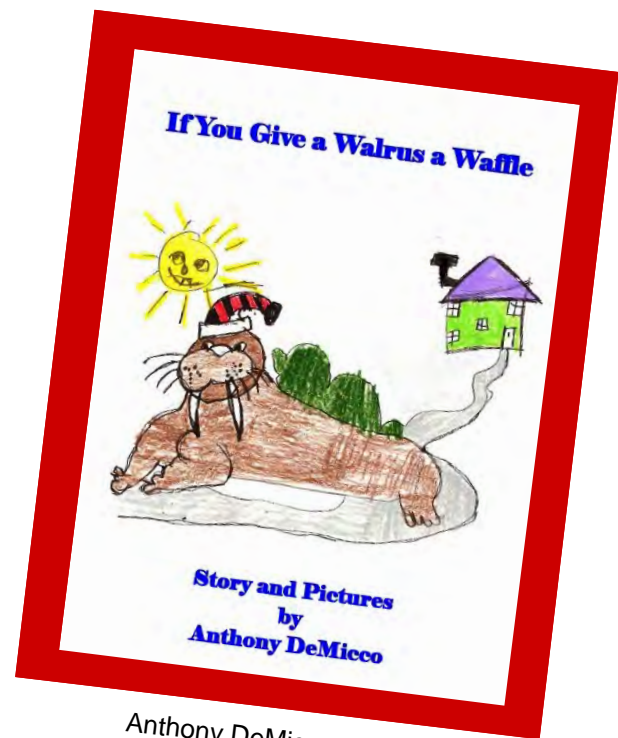
### 3 - **Lead The Older Children In More Advanced Activities.**

More capable children can learn to use a thesaurus and complete exercises from *Write Source 2000*, published by Houghton Mifflin Company.

(Visit <http://thewritesource.com/> .)



Dominic DeMicco, Age 4.  
If You Give a Rhino a Doughnut.



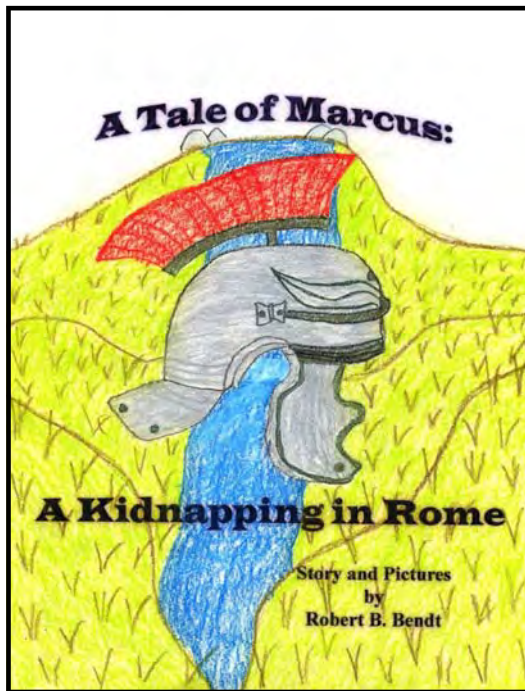
Anthony DeMicco, Age 7.  
If You Give a Walrus a Waffle.



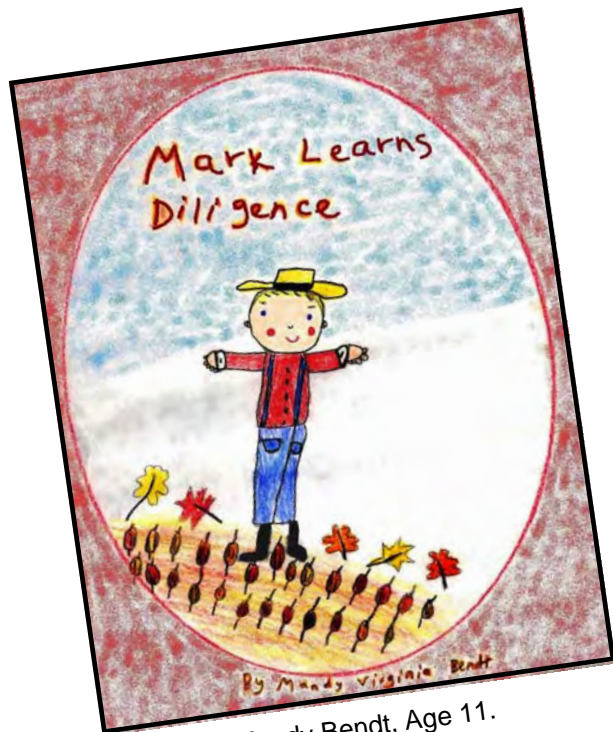
Randall Bendt, Age 6.  
*The Magical Battle.*



Randall Bendt, Age 9.  
*The Eye of Doom.*



Robert Bendt, Age 12.  
*A Tale of Marcus:  
A Kidnapping in Rome.*



Mandy Bendt, Age 11.  
*Mark Learns Diligence.*

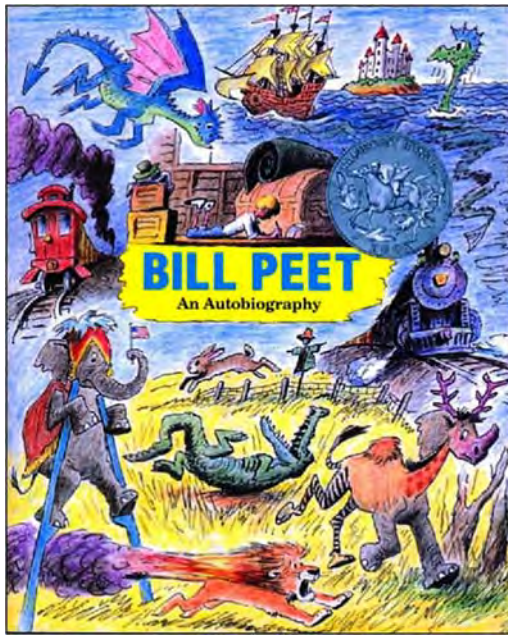


# W E E K - O N E

## Pre-Writing Activities

### 1 - Selecting And Reading Library Books With Your Children

During the first week, your children will be reading and observing a number of books. I suggest that you visit your local library and select about twenty to twenty-five books that are very different from each other in subject and style. It is also advised that you read a biography or two about one of the authors whose books you have chosen to read during the course of this study. Read some of the library books you have selected with your children. Allow them to read some on their own, and have them read some aloud to you. By performing these simple activities, your children will be building listening comprehension, silent reading, and oral reading skills.

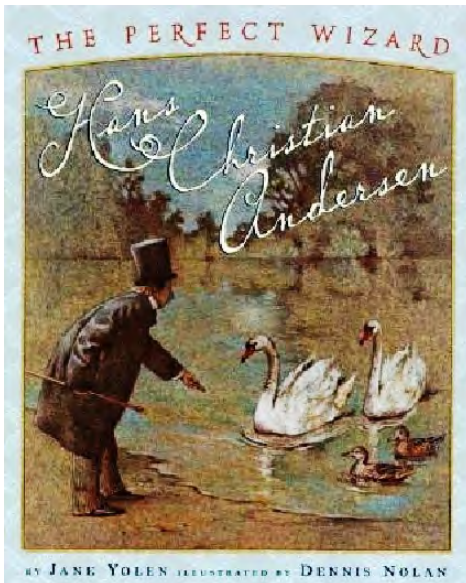


### Biographies

*Bill Peet, An Autobiography.* Bill Peet began his drawing and writing career at the Disney studios. While still creating for Disney films, he began writing and illustrating books and has written over thirty children's books. As a child he paid little attention to his studies in school; however, he loved to draw, so he drew in the margins of his school books. At the end of the year, his books were best sellers at the used book sale. Mr. Peet said that he supposed those were the first books he ever illustrated for children! He also acknowledged that he learned very little about writing in school, but his love for reading and frequent trips to the library gave him the foundation he needed to be able to write his own books. This is a charming book to read while engaged in creating your own books, and it is sure to be an inspiration to your children. My children, even the older children, really enjoy Bill Peet's

delightful books. Check out the Bill Peet website: <http://www.billpeet.net/>.

*Songs for Sixpence: A Story About John Newbery*, by Josephine Blackstock. This is a biography of John Newbery, for whom the Newbery Medal is named. The Newbery Medal is awarded to the book making the greatest contribution to children's literature in the year that it was published. *Songs for Sixpence* takes you back to London in the 1700's where John Newbery has opened a book shop and writes and encourages the writing of books for children. Interesting details are given concerning his childhood as well. (This book is out-of-print but worth reading if you can locate a copy.)



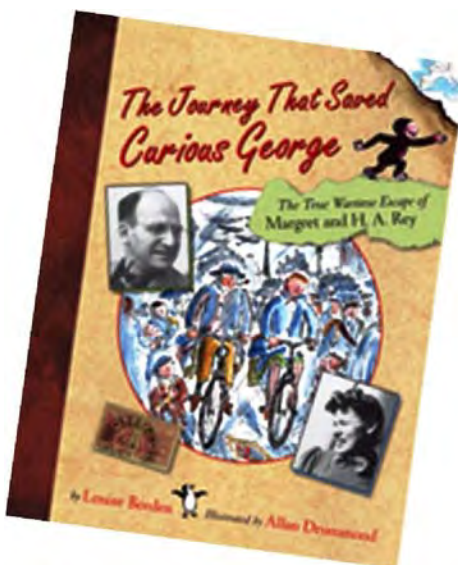
*The Perfect Wizard: Hans Christian Andersen*, by Jane Yolen. This biography of the famous Danish writer of fairy tales is sprinkled with excerpts from his stories. Andersen was born in Denmark, therefore, his books were originally written in Danish. Today we have many translations of his original tales. It is interesting to compare two different translations. Visit the Hans Christian Andersen Center website: [http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/index\\_e.html](http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/index_e.html).

*Nothing is Impossible*, by Dorothy Aldis. This biography relates the life of Beatrix Potter, one of the most famous of children's writers. Miss Potter is fascinating to study while



making books with your children as she was an author as well as an illustrator. You will discover that her stories began as letters to her dear friend's children to comfort them when they were ill. Another excellent biography is *The Country Artist: A Story about Beatrix Potter* by David R. Collins. Check out this wonderful website hosted by Ohio University for more information and stories by Beatrix Potter: <http://wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm>.

*Invincible Louisa*, by Cornelia Meigs. This is the classic biography of Louisa May Alcott, the author of well-loved books such as *Little Women* and *Little Men*. Older students will benefit from reading this account of a truly inspiring individual.



*The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*. Learn how the Reys pedaled their make-shift bicycles through back roads in France to escape the Nazis invasion. For more information visit: <http://www.hmhbooks.com/features/cgsite/history.shtml#authors>.

You may want to study about other children's authors as well. I have mentioned only a few. I suggest that you read aloud one or two biographies and research several other authors by simply using an encyclopedia or an electronic library reference book such as *Something About the Author*.

Peruse your library for books by the authors mentioned above and by others such as Dr. Seuss, Don Freeman, Eric Carle, Alice Dalgliesh, A.A. Milne, Robert Louis Stevenson, Elizabeth George Speare, Mark Twain, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Gary Paulsen, Robert McCloskey, Virginia Lee Burton, and others. Remember to refer to *Books Children Love* and *Honey for a Child's Heart* for more book ideas.

## Reading Books Aloud With Your Children

I urge you to read many short story books aloud to your children while conducting this unit, since they will be writing a relatively short book themselves. Most picture books, as they are commonly called, are written for young children so they may not be appealing to older children. However, it is generally adults who write these books for young children, so it is advantageous for older children to read these books from an observer's point of view. If you can manage to read one long book aloud to your children during this unit it will be beneficial, as longer books, especially classics such as *Heidi*, *Peter Pan*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Little Women*, and others offer a lavish feast of rich details. Older children will profit from reading some of these books on their own as well. For more ideas on studying children's classics, see the section on "Literature-based Units" in my *Unit Studies Made Easy* book.

As you read these library books with your children, discuss the stories and text layout. Encourage your children to observe all possible details, telling what they did and didn't like about the story and the illustrations. Have your children make a list of ideas for possible inclusion in their books. For example, some children might like to write about a particular time period and others might like to write their books in verse. From a visual perspective some children might like to include borders on all of their pages and others might like to make their own stencils for their illustrations. This observation exercise will prove invaluable as your children begin developing their stories and illustrations.

## 2 - Completing Copying And/Or Dictation Exercises

Throughout the week have your children do copying or dictation exercises, of appropriate length, from passages excerpted from some books you are reading. Choose passages that: contain dialogue; physically describe a character; reveal the true personality of a character; create a visual image with words; depict advancement in time; demonstrate what a character is thinking about as expressed by the narrator; display the atmosphere of the story; introduce a conflict, problem, or mystery; offer additional details concerning the conflict, problem, or mystery; express how the conflict, problem, or mystery is resolved; and in some instances indicate historical period.

Although you will not find passages to fit each category given above from every book you read, you will be able to find excerpts relating to most of the categories. After you have chosen the selections to be taken from dictation or to be copied, discuss the importance of each passage with your children. A more involved assignment entails having your children look for specific passages to fit each category mentioned above, and then copy these passages. I have included excerpts from a paraphrase of Hans Christian Andersen's tale *The Ugly Duckling* to illustrate the categories described above. You may use these examples with your children and then develop your own copying and dictation assignments. Through these preliminary exercises, your children will become more aware of the elements that combine to make a good story. This exposure will strengthen their ability to integrate key elements into their own stories.

## **OBSERVING PASSAGES CONTAINING KEY STORY ELEMENTS**

### **From Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling***

#### **Passages That Contain Dialogue**

“Let me see the egg that refuses to hatch,” said the old duck. “I’ll wager that it’s a turkey egg! Let me look at the egg. Yes, it’s surely a turkey egg! Abandon it, and just teach the other children how to swim.”

“I think I shall sit on it a while longer,” said the duck. “I’ve sat for such a long time now that I may as well sit for a few more days.”

“As you like,” said the old one, as she waddled down to the water’s edge.

#### **Passages That Physically Describe A Character**

One autumn evening when the sun was setting in all its fiery glory, an entire flock of enormous handsome birds came out of the rushes. The duckling had never beheld anything so beautiful. The birds were dazzlingly white, with long, slender graceful necks.

#### **Passages That Reveal The True Personality Of A Character**

He instantly felt shy and covered his head with his great wing. He didn’t know what to do—he was truly happy, and yet not at all proud, because he had a pure, honest heart.

#### **Passages That Create A Visual Image With Words**

The summer countryside was enchanting, clothed in its golden cornfields, green oats, and meadows dotted with aromatic haystacks. Near the tidy fields and lush meadows was a large forest, and in the middle of the forest were deep, dark blue lakes. At the edge of the state-ly forest stood an old manor house encircled by deep canals, and from its vine entangled walls down to the canal banks grew gardens with tremendous burdocks, so high that young children could stand erect under the tallest of them.

#### **Passages That Depict Advancement In Time**

It would be too sorrowful to relate all the affliction and adversity the duckling suffered through that perilous winter. Then one day the sun began to shine warmly again over the land. The birds were singing their first melodies of springtime. Suddenly the duckling flapped his wings. They beat the air more forcefully than before, and he flew away rapidly.

#### **Passages That Demonstrate What A Character Is Thinking About As Ex-pressed By The Narrator**

He could never forget those beautiful birds that radiated happiness; and as soon as they disappeared into the clouds, he dived straight down, down to the bottom of the lake. When he surfaced, he was torn with confusion and unhappiness. He didn’t know what kind of birds they were, or where they were headed; but he loved them more deeply than he had ever loved anything before. He didn’t envy them at all, for how could he wish for the glorious beauty that enveloped them? He would have been quite satisfied if even the ducks would have permitted him to stay with them.

## **Passages That Display The Atmosphere Of The Story**

He sat completely still while the shots clattered amid the reeds, and shot after shot resounded. At long last, late in the evening, all was peaceful again. The bewildered duckling did not dare to move; he lingered several hours before investigating his surroundings, and then he retreated from the marsh as quickly as he could. He scampered on through storm tossed fields and meadows, making his escape even more difficult.

## **Passages That Introduce A Conflict, Problem, Or Mystery**

Eventually the last egg broke. “Peep! Peep!” it said, as it scratched its way out of the shell. It was exceptionally large and exceedingly ugly! The mother duck gawked at it.

“It’s awfully large for a duckling,” she remarked. “It resembles none of the others.”

## **Passages That Offer Additional Details Concerning The Conflict, Problem, Or Mystery**

The poor duckling who was the last to hatch, who looked dreadfully ugly, was bitten and teased and prodded by the majority of the ducks and the other poultry. The pitiful duckling did not know where to rest or where to swim. He was positively miserable because he looked so gawky and was tormented by the whole yard. So went the affairs of the first day, and matters only continued to get worse.

## **Passages That Express How The Conflict, Problem, Or Mystery Is Resolved**

“If I fly over these majestic birds they will surely strike me because I am so ugly. I have not dared to approach them, but now that doesn’t matter! It will be better to be killed by them than to be bitten by ducks, tortured by nasty fowls, kicked by the hired girl, or agonize from hunger in the winter!”

He landed in the water and swam toward the regal birds. “Kill me!” said the ugly duckling, as the beautiful creatures came sailing up to him with feathers outstretched. As he lowered his head down to the water awaiting his demise, he saw his image glistening in the clear water. He was astounded. He was no longer an ungainly, dark gray bird, clumsy and grotesque— he was a magnificent white swan.

It matters not if you are born in a duck yard if you hatch from the egg of a swan.

## **Passages That Indicate Historical Period**

Often a period of history can be conveyed through the use of well-chosen words. For example, in *Robin Hood*:

In merry England in the time of old, when good King Henry the Second ruled the land, there lived within the green glades of Sherwood Forest, near Nottingham Town, a famous outlaw whose name was Robin Hood. No archer ever lived that could speed a gray goose shaft with such skill and cunning as his, nor were there ever such yeomen as the seven score merry men that roamed with him through the greenwood glades.

These copying and dictation exercises will help your children to more carefully observe elements that enhance story content while also giving them practice with punctuation, spelling,

capitalization, vocabulary, and grammatical structure. You may choose shorter or longer passages to suit the needs of each child.

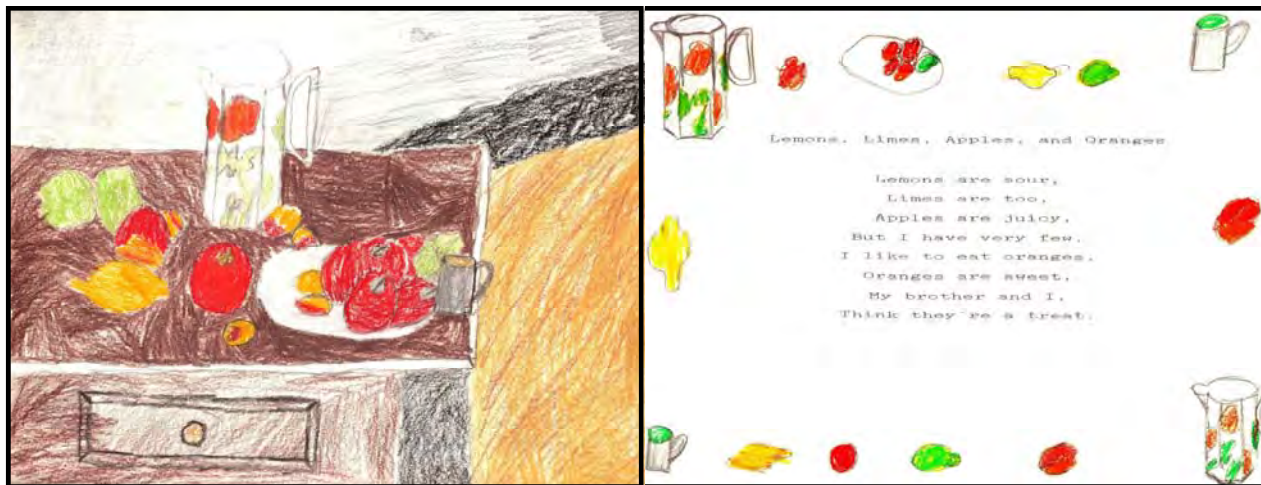
Younger children will benefit from copying passages that you have written correctly for them. I suggest you write the passage neatly on large lined paper, skipping lines as you proceed to allow them to write directly under the words that you have written. I often record the passages on audio cassette tape to be dictated to older children the evening beforehand. This enables them to work on their own while I help a younger child who is copying or taking dictation from me personally.

### 3 - Leading The Older Children In More Advanced Activities

Have the capable children rewrite a passage they have copied or taken from dictation the previous day. Instruct them in using a thesaurus to locate alternate words. As they write their own stories they will find that a good thesaurus is a beneficial tool, especially for the editing process, as they seek to find words that are more colorful and to eliminate words that they over-use.



During this week of pre-writing assignments, I suggest that you examine a few of the exercises from *Write Source 2000*, a writing handbook published by Houghton Mifflin Company. I especially recommend the section entitled “The Basic Elements Of Writing.” You will find *Write Source 2000* to be an invaluable tool for editing your children’s writings. Visit <http://thewritesource.com/> to see the entire line of writing handbooks that they publish for kindergarten through twelfth grade. *Write Source 2000* is designed for the middle grades, however, it offers much information for learners of all ages. This is a good choice for families who want a one-size-fits-all writing handbook.



Raymond Bendt, Age 8.  
*Fine Art Favorites and Poems.*