

THE LANGUAGE LEDGER

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Great Ideas for Teachers!

2008/2009

Revolutionizing the way students understand grammar

In order to make grammar instruction more meaningful and less time-consuming, National Board Certified English teacher Dawn Burnette developed *Daily Grammar Practice*, a method that is helping students worldwide to make sense of grammar.

Burnette's research-based approach

enables students in first grade through college to understand, remember, and apply grammar concepts. The program offers students small doses of grammar each day—like vitamins—but also enables them to see how all of the parts work together.

“Whereas most grammar approaches are organized by concept—a

lesson on nouns, a lesson on verbs—*Daily Grammar Practice* requires students to work with one sentence for a week at a time, analyzing it further each day so that by the end of the week, they see the big picture,” says Burnette. “Each week’s lesson incorporates concepts ranging from parts of speech to sentence structure to punctuation,” she adds.

Daily Grammar Practice, which takes less than five minutes a day, has been proven to be effective for all grade levels and ability levels as well as for English Language Learners. The program eliminates the need for lengthy grammar exercises and the need for starting over each year with nouns.

Ellen Orr, an English teacher and coordinator at a parochial Florida school, says teachers at her school immediately noticed improvements in students’ writing skills after implementing *Daily Grammar Practice*.

High school sophomore Jane Welch explains why: “If you don’t understand sentence structure, you don’t know how to frame your thoughts to get your point across. *Daily Grammar Practice* helps you write more coherently and more correctly.”

First published in August of 2003, *Daily Grammar Practice* is now used in public, private, and home schools in all fifty states and in nine foreign countries. *Daily Grammar Practice* is also available for students learning French, Latin, and Spanish. A Biblical version allows students at six different levels to memorize a Bible verse while learning grammar.

Each teacher guide includes instructions, lessons, reproducible materials, references pages, and answer keys. Optional CDs or overhead transparency sets allow teachers to project each day’s assignment for students. Optional student workbooks are also available.

Week Two Lesson (Grade 10)

Monday: Identify parts of speech: Label each noun, pronoun (type and case), verb (type and tense), adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction (type), gerund, participle, infinitive, and article.

poss ind pron n prep ---N---- art n hv av prep art n cc pron n prep
 someones copy of ethan frome a novel was found in the room but my copy of
 art n ---N---- hv adv av past/pv l nom
 the play our town is still missing
 pres prog

Tuesday: Identify sentence parts: Label each subject, verb (transitive or intransitive), direct object, indirect object, predicate nominative, predicate adjective, appositive or appositive phrase, prepositional phrase (adjective or adverb), gerund phrase, infinitive phrase, participial phrase, object of preposition, object of infinitive, object of gerund, and object of participle.

s ---op--- app vt/pass op n
 someones copy (of ethan frome a novel) was found (in the room) but my copy
 op ---app--- adj prep ph adv prep ph
 (of the play our town) is still missing
 adj prep ph vi

Wednesday: Identify clauses and sentence type: Label each independent, adverb dependent, adjective dependent, and noun dependent clause; identify the sentence as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

ind cl ind cl
 [someones copy of ethan frome a novel was found in the room] but [my copy of
 the play our town is still missing] compound

Thursday: Add punctuation and capitalization: Now that you’ve analyzed the sentence, add necessary end marks, commas, semicolons, apostrophes, underlining, and quotation marks. Be prepared to justify your choices.

Someone’s copy of Ethan Frome, a novel, was found in the room, but my copy
 of the play Our Town is still missing.

Friday: Diagram the sentence.



Reading for meaning-- one day at a time

Although most students learn to read words, many are unable to understand what they read. In most cases, these students are fully capable of understanding, but they've never been taught a systematic, organized approach to reading comprehension.

Teacher-created *Daily Reading Practice*, like its predecessor *Daily Grammar Practice*, provides students with a short review that focuses on a different skill set each day.

Students work with one reading selection each week. Then they study that selection each day and complete such tasks as identifying subject and purpose on Monday, engaging in word study on Tuesday, making inferences and relating to prior knowledge on Wednesday, creating graphic organizers and skimming on Thursday, and writing summaries on Friday.

"Traditionally, students read a selection one time and then move on without really digging into the meaning," explains author Judith Holbrook. "The repeated practice in *Daily Reading*

Practice teaches students **how** to understand what they read."

Each level of *Daily Reading Practice* contains 30 high-interest reading selections with related questions and assignments.

Selections, which cover a variety of subject areas, increase in difficulty as the year progresses and prepare students to handle passages on standardized tests.

Student "help pages" provide

useful information about everything from root words to literary techniques to summarizing skills. Students can complete the short, daily reviews with or without workbooks.

Daily Reading Practice teacher guides with instructions, reproducible materials, and answer keys are available for grades 1-8. Optional CDs or overhead transparency sets allow teachers to project each day's assignment for students.

Grade 4: Week Three

Title

Chinese Rummy is a card game that is both fun and frustrating. Using a normal deck of 52 cards plus the jokers for every two people, partners compete against other partners to try to get the fewest points. Eleven cards are dealt to each person. Play starts when the person to the left of the dealer draws a card from the pile. Ten rounds of play, with increasingly difficult requirements for each round, make up the game. The game begins at round one with each person required to obtain two sets of three cards. The game ends at round ten with the requirement for three runs of five cards. Players are able to "buy" cards in order to obtain the number of cards needed for each round. Points are added to the opposing team's score when one player goes out and other players are left holding cards. The team with the fewest points wins the game.

Monday

1. Read the selection carefully. The subject of this selection is _____.
2. At the top of this page, write a title for this selection.
3. The author's purpose in writing this selection is to _____. teach entertain
4. The genre of this selection is _____.

Tuesday

5. An antonym for the word easy in the selection is _____.
6. What does the word requirements mean in this selection?
 needs things done to make ready series
7. Write the base word for each selection word.
increasingly _____ holding _____

Wednesday

8. Each round is harder to complete than the one before it. True False
9. The selection doesn't say, but this game is best if played with at least ____ people.
 four six eight
10. It would be impossible to play this game using only the above directions because _____.

Thursday

11. The first sentence gives _____ facts. _____ an opinion. (Circle one)
12. Number these steps in the correct order: _____ Add up total points _____ Shuffle cards
_____ Deal 11 cards to each player _____ Play round one

Friday

13. Highlight 5-6 key words in the selection. Write a 3-4 sentence summary of the selection using your key words. It is not necessary to use all of your key words. Be sure to use correct spelling and punctuation. _____

Reading Plus: Building Stronger Readers

Reading Plus is a user-friendly book that contains cross-curricular activities and strategies for improving reading comprehension in grades K-8. (\$9.95)

Need SAT and ACT Prep Materials?

DGP Publishing carries *The Essential Guide to the SAT* and *The Essential Guide to the ACT* by College Options Foundation. Each complete guide provides instruction, sample questions, a full-length test, and an interactive game CD for further practice. \$24.95 per guide.



Help students visualize what they read

In today's visual society, students often depend on visual cues to understand text. But when there aren't any pictures, many students have difficulty with comprehension.

The *You Can Picture It* series is a simple, creative method for helping students in grades one through five to understand what they read. It is also effective for English Language Learners.

Students read a fictional story, nonfiction article, or poem; create visual images in their minds; draw those pictures on paper; and summarize the selection. Each reading selection is divided into four segments, allowing students to practice sequencing skills as well. Students begin with a page of text and end with an illustrated book.

"When students use this approach, you can almost *see* them picturing the text in their minds. And they enjoy it!" explains educator and program author Judith Holbrook.

"When children visualize what they're reading and then put that picture on the paper, it helps them to understand the main idea of the story as well as the details," says Carol Hancock, a second-grade teacher.

Three separate teacher guides are available: one for fiction, one for nonfiction, and one for poetry. Each book contains complete directions, multiple reading selections for each grade level, and grading rubrics.

The "key" to spelling

It's no secret that today's students are poor spellers. Studying phonics helps only for words spelled phonetically, and memorizing lists of words is clearly ineffective. Students memorize the words for their Friday spelling test and then forget them before sunrise on Saturday.

Daily Spelling Practice teaches students to spell by focusing on sound keys, addressing prefixes and suffixes, working with syllables, and providing practice with spelling confusables and rule-breaking memory words. Students work with these skills on a daily basis as they see how the concepts build one upon another.

The philosophy of *Daily Spelling Practice* is simple: If you teach students how to **spell a word**, they'll spell it correctly on Friday. But if you teach them how to **spell**, they'll spell every word correctly every day.

Each of the four levels of *Daily Spelling Practice* presents 25 different spelling keys (one per week) and includes five interspersed review weeks. Like the successful *Daily Grammar Practice* approach, *Daily Spelling Practice* is designed to take a few minutes every day. Students can work with or without workbooks. Optional CDs or overhead transparency sets allow teachers to project each day's assignment for students.

Students can begin the four-year program as early as second grade or as late as ninth grade. Because it is a process that builds from beginning to end, students need all four levels to gain a complete understanding of spelling.

Key #5: nut

Monday

1. Fill in the missing letters as your teacher calls out each target word.

_____ u _____ u _____ u _____ u _____ u _____

2. Make your own words by putting letters in the blanks.

_____ u _____ u _____ u _____

3. This week's memory word is *surprise*. Write *surprise* three times.

(Hint: Surprise has a surprise *r* inside!)

Tuesday

Adding on: When a one-syllable word ends in (or is made only of) consonant-vowel-consonant, double the last letter before you add a suffix that starts with a vowel (nap + ing = napping).

1. Use this rule to add *ing* to three of your target words.

_____ ing _____ ing _____ ing

2. Make your own *ing* words using Key #1, #2, #3, #4, or #5.

_____ ing _____ ing _____ ing

Wednesday

Some is an amount. (I put *some* water in the cup.)

Sum is what you get when you add numbers together. (The *sum* of two and two is four.)

1. Write the correct word (*some* or *sum*) in each blank.

_____ kids were running at the park. We had fun figuring out the _____ of two and ten.

2. Write your own sentence with *some* and your own sentence with *sum*.

Thursday

1. In each pair, underline the word that is spelled correctly.

fun/fen hunt/hont sune/sun peting/petting yoht/yacht laped/lapped tens/tenz

2. Search this page for words that use Key #5. Circle any that you find.

Friday

Check Yourself: On a separate sheet of paper, correctly spell each word that your teacher calls out.

Daily Grammar Practice (DGP)

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(More Spanish levels are coming! Check website for availability.)

Daily Bible Grammar Practice

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Call or email for school-wide and system-wide pricing.

Other Writing Materials

FW	Focused Writing: An Elementary Writing Process	\$36.95
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CP101	Classroom Publishing 101: A Step-by-Step Guide	\$16.95

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A novel approach to vocabulary instruction

How do you teach word attack skills, help students remember and use new vocabulary words, individualize vocabulary instruction, and encourage students to read more attentively all at

the same time? Simple. Use *Vocabulary: A Novel Solution* and *Vocabulary: An Elementary Approach*.

The Novel Solution and Elementary Approach vocabulary programs

are research-based and literature-based. Before reading a given book or play, students take a pretest over 15-25 target words (depending on the grade level). Then, as they read, they look for the words they missed and record them on special Word Logs.

“The Word Logs are where the real thinking and learning take place,” explains teacher and program developer Dawn Burnette. “Students must learn *about* the new words: their structures, their various forms, their uses and connotations. Also, students learn to figure out a word’s meaning from its context, which is what most standardized tests require.”

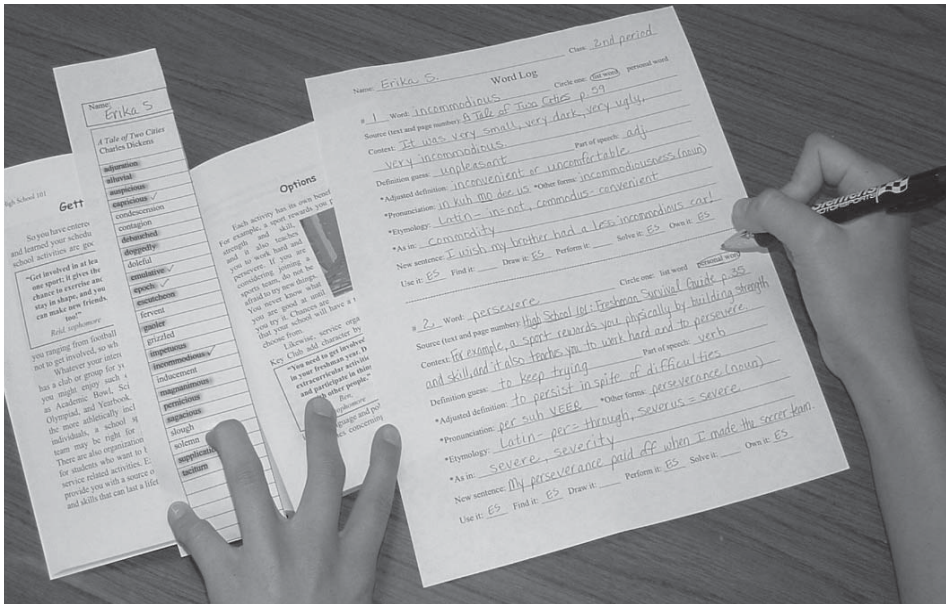
One of the most impressive features of these vocabulary programs is that they are individualized. “If you give a student a list of 25 words to learn and he or she already knows five of them, that student really learns only 20 new words,” explains Burnette.

“With this approach, however, a student who already knows five of the target words replaces those words with unfamiliar ones from his or her reading. As a result, each student learns not only word attack skills but also at least 25 new words with each novel or play that he or she reads.”

In addition to being individualized, the programs are easy --and even fun--to use. With the swipe of a paper cutter, pretests become word list bookmarks. Reinforcement activities included in the guides cater to multiple intelligences.

Novel Solution and Elementary Approach vocabulary guides are available or coming soon for over 100 different novels, stories, and plays.

Each guide includes instructions, examples, reproducible materials, and answer keys for use with one novel, story, or play. Root, prefix, and suffix charts are included as well.



Titles Available for Vocabulary: A Novel Solution

Across Five Aprils * Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The * Alas, Babylon * All Quiet on the Western Front * Awakening, The * Beowulf * Brave New World * Call of the Wild, The * Catcher in the Rye, The * Chosen, The * Count of Monte Cristo, The * Crucible, The * Cry, the Beloved Country * Emma * Fahrenheit 451 * Farewell to Arms, A * Flowers for Algernon * Frankenstein * Gathering of Old Men, A * Giver, The * Great Expectations * Great Gatsby, The * Great Gilly Hopkins, The * Gulliver's Travels * Hamlet * Hatchet * Hobbit, The * I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings * Jane Eyre * Johnny Tremain * Joy Luck Club, The * Julius Caesar * Lord of the Flies, The * Macbeth * Midsummer Night's Dream, A * Night * Obasan * Odyssey * Of Mice and Men * Outsiders, The * Pearl, The * Pride and Prejudice * Red Badge of Courage, The * Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry * Romeo and Juliet * Scarlet Letter, The * Separate Peace, A * Summer of My German Soldier * Tale of Two Cities, A * Taming of the Shrew, The * Their Eyes Were Watching God * Things Fall Apart * To Kill a Mockingbird * Trouble Don't Last * Tuck Everlasting * Warriors Don't Cry * Witch of Blackbird Pond * Wuthering Heights * Z for Zachariah

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To request a title, please email dgp01@dgppublishing.com.

Focusing on success for all K-5 writers

Focused Writing: An Elementary Writing Process helps elementary students focus on specific skills while learning the basics of writing.

The curriculum is divided into three levels: A, B, and C. The “A” writers are beginners to the process of writing. The “B” writers have mastered a few skills but need lots of practice. The “C” writers have mastered more skills but need to broaden their abilities. Each of the 36 assignments in the book is presented at all three levels with increasing difficulty and substance.

Each writing assignment consists of an overview, a target author and audience, a specified format, a procedure, and suggested focus skills. The final component is a self-assessment rubric that allows the student to assess and reflect on the writing and gives the teacher a chance to better understand the writer’s thought process. The teacher then scores the final paper and provides feedback to guide the student.

The teacher is able to individualize assignments by using different focus skills for different students. The

skills are divided into the following categories: content, organization, style, conventions, format, and challenge. Using the leveled assignments and the focus skills, the teacher can introduce new writing strategies and review previously introduced skills. Included are mini-lessons to introduce or reteach the 45 skills that are presented throughout the curriculum.

The writing assignments cover a wide range of genres including narratives, expository paragraphs, poetry, descriptive pieces, summaries, letters, and more. With the varied and leveled assignments, the teacher is able to meet the needs of all elementary writers wherever they are in their writing journey.

Program developers and veteran teachers Judith Holbrook and Carol Hancock hope *Focused Writing: An Elementary Writing Process* will enable you to help your elementary students think like writers and reach their potential as writers. For sample lessons, visit www.dgppublishing.com.

Writing Assignment #4B

Narrative

Assignment Overview: You have just moved into a new school, church, or neighborhood. Your school, church, or neighborhood newspaper has asked you to write between four and six sentences (that’s all there is room for in the newspaper) giving information about yourself. This will be a way of introducing yourself to new friends.

Author and Audience: You will be writing as yourself. Your audience will be your new friends and neighbors.

Form: You are to write four to six sentences telling about yourself. Put as much information as you can in your sentences.

Procedure:

Prewriting:	Begin by making a character web about yourself.
Writing the first draft:	Use your web to write your sentences.
Revising:	Read over what you have written. Do you need to change anything? Can you make your sentences better? Do you need to rewrite something that is not clear?
Editing/Proofreading:	Check over your first draft. Look for any mistakes and fix them now. Did you use correct spelling? Use your best handwriting to copy over your sentences. Check them again to see if you copied everything correctly.
Assessing:	Complete the rubric. Reflect and write about how you completed this assignment.
Publishing:	Attach your picture to your final draft. Share your sentences with your classmates and then display your writing in the classroom.

Suggested Focus Skills:

Content: Stays on topic	√ your skills
Style: Uses interesting words	_____
Conventions: Uses capital letters correctly	_____
Conventions: Uses end punctuation correctly	_____
Format: Double spaces writing	_____
_____	_____

DGP Plus: Building Stronger Writers

This book contains innovative writing activities and strategies for applying grammar concepts to writing. *DGP Plus* is appropriate for all grade levels and ability levels. (\$7.95)

Classroom Publishing 101: A Step-by-Step Guide

This easy-to-follow book includes everything you need to plan and execute a meaningful publishing project for students of any age. Motivate and inspire your students with authentic audiences, real-life applications, and cross-curricular experiences. (\$16.95)

Improve writing through focus and annotation

The *Burnette Writing Process* enables middle and high school students to improve as writers--and helps teachers grade writing assignments more quickly and more effectively!

"This individualized approach forces students to think critically about their own writing," explains developer and veteran teacher Dawn Burnette. "To become better writers, students must learn to think like writers--evaluating their own writing and understanding their own rhetorical choices."

For each writing assignment, students work on a few specific focus skills in the following categories: content, organization, style, conventions, format, and challenge.

"Every writing assignment should be a learning experience," explains Burnette, "but students can't learn everything about writing in a single

assignment." Standards-based focus skills allow students to make meaningful progress without feeling overwhelmed.

Teachers can easily differentiate focus skills so that each student gets the remediation or the enrichment that he or she needs.

"Focus skills really help me to develop specific aspects of my writing like style and content rather than just to fix common errors," says high school sophomore Lili Sowers.

Innovative and interactive writing lessons help all students to hone their skills and to understand the complexities of writing.

For each final draft, students annotate, self-assess, and reflect to demonstrate their understanding of each focus skill. This process helps students move beyond spell check and become aware of and responsible for their own

writing progress.

"I love annotating my essays," explains middle school student Matt Kellim, "because once I start, I can see where I need to go back and fix something so I don't turn in a paper that I'm not truly proud of in every way."

Because students truly understand the skills, they continue to use them automatically even after moving on to new skills. Also, the use of focus skills and annotation almost completely eliminates plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

Grading takes less time—while feedback is more meaningful—because teachers respond to and assess only the focus skills.

Teachers can use a web-based program (www.writingprocess.net) to create and/or download assignments, to automatically generate individualized rubrics, and to monitor student progress. Students and parents can access the site to check progress, to view and print assignments and rubrics, and to get writing tutorials. An optional class-wide message board allows students and teacher to interact as a community of writers.

A one-year subscription to [writingprocess.net](http://www.writingprocess.net) includes a *Burnette Writing Process* teacher's manual with instructions, examples, and writing lessons. The subscription also provides access to [writingprocess.net](http://www.writingprocess.net) for the teacher and for all of his or her students (and their parents). Teacher and student accounts and data roll over from one year to the next with subscription renewal.

To explore www.writingprocess.net, click [login](#) in the upper right corner of the home page. Log in as a teacher by typing test@writingprocess.net as the email address and [test](#) as the password. Use the instructions and menu options on the screen to navigate the site.

Burnette Writing Process at a Glance

1. Teacher logs onto www.writingprocess.net and imports a meaningful assignment or uses a template to create an original writing assignment.
2. Teacher (with or without the help of students) selects appropriate focus skills, and writingprocess.net automatically generates a rubric. (It is easy to individualize focus skills for remediation and/or enrichment.)
3. Teacher presents assignment and writing lesson. (Lessons are included in *Burnette Writing Process Teacher's Manual*—included with subscription.)
4. Students pre-write and generate rough drafts (on paper).
5. Students revise and edit to address focus skills. ([Writingprocess.net](http://writingprocess.net) includes descriptions and examples of each focus skill. Teachers can add and/or change focus skills, descriptions, and examples.)
6. Students annotate their final drafts and self-assess and reflect on their rubrics (on paper).
7. Teacher uses rubrics and student feedback to assess final drafts (in less time than it takes to grade the "traditional" way).
8. Teacher or students update student Focus Skills Progress Charts on writingprocess.net.
9. Parents can check student progress at any time using writingprocess.net.
10. Teacher and/or students can communicate via a class-wide message board (if teacher allows).
11. Teacher can access individual and class-wide reports of student progress. (This information carries over from one year to the next.)
12. Teacher uses information about student progress to create new assignments and to help each student reach his or her maximum potential.