

Medieval History-Based Writing Lessons

in

Structure, Style, Grammar, and Vocabulary

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INTRODUCTION

A Note to Teachers and Parents

The lessons in this book are designed to teach structure and style in writing. Instructions are provided for both Level A (4th- 5th grade) and Level B (6th-8th grade) students. As the lessons move through Medieval History themes, they incrementally introduce and review most of the models of structure and elements of style found in the Institute for Excellence in Writing's *Teaching Writing: Structure and Style*. **Instructions are directed to the student, but teachers should read them over with their students and help as necessary, especially with outlining and brainstorming.** It is assumed that teachers have attended IEW's Basic Seminar, either live or via DVD, and own the seminar workbook. Before each new unit, it would be helpful for the teacher to review the appropriate information in that workbook.

BOOK COMPONENTS

This book has four components:

1. THE STUDENT PAGES: This is the majority of the text. It contains the instructions, source texts, worksheets, and checklists needed for each lesson.

2. TIPS & ANSWERS FOR TEACHERS: This section provides extra help for teaching each of the lessons. There are some sample whiteboards to help with outlining and brainstorming, answers to worksheets and vocabulary quizzes, and ideas for games to help reinforce important concepts from the lessons and to review vocabulary words. *Since you will want to refer to this section often, it would be wise to tab it. It begins on page 127.*

3. STYLE HELPS: This section begins on page 133. It begins with a chart of stylistic techniques taught throughout the course. It also contains lists of great words, such as those that can replace banned words, and quality -ly words. *Students will want to refer to this section often, so it would be wise to tab it.*

4. VOCABULARY QUIZZES & CARDS: This section begins on page 138 with the quizzes. The lessons instruct students when to take each of these. Answers for the quizzes are in the TIPS AND ANSWERS FOR TEACHERS section under the lesson in which they are assigned.

The vocabulary cards follow the quizzes. There is a sheet of four cards for each of the lessons. Students should cut out one set each lesson, hole-punch the top right corner of each card, and place them on a metal book ring for easy reference. (Lessons instruct students when to do so.) A few vocabulary words are required to be used in each composition, so these words will become part of the students' natural writing vocabulary.

GRADE LEVELS

Lessons are written so that students may easily move through them at their own pace. **Level A student** instructions are generally aimed at elementary students while **Level B** instructions are appropriate for junior high students. In general, **Level A students** are required to do only one paragraph per week. For this reason, lessons are broken into their individual paragraphs or sections. **Level B students** should be able to complete up to three paragraphs per week. If you are teaching a variety of grade levels at the same time, students may work on the same lesson at the same time, but **Level A** students would do only the simplest paragraph while **Level B** would do them all. In addition, you may decide to omit some of the required elements of style for younger students by simply crossing through things on the checklist they may not be ready for yet. **Don't be afraid to adapt the lessons and checklists to the needs of your students.**

GRADING & CHECKLISTS

Lessons include two types of checklists: rough and final. Rough checklists accompany each paragraph (or section) of every composition. The purpose of these is to list for students the required elements of that section. Rough checklists are not intended to be used for grading purposes, so no point values are indicated.

Final checklists list all the required elements for an entire composition, and each element is assigned a point value. While these checklists are specifically for the teacher to use for grading, students will find them helpful in double-checking that they have met all requirements. To grade a composition, use the blank or box next to each requirement to note either that the requirement was met (with a check mark) or that it was not met (by writing the points to be deducted). Then total the points to be deducted and subtract them from the total points possible. This will give you the points earned. If you prefer to convert the score to a percent, simply divide the points earned by the points possible.

A PERSONAL BOOK OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY

It is highly recommended that you encourage your students to polish each of their final drafts and even add illustrations. At the end of the year, they will have a collection of a variety of types of compositions that move through major themes in Medieval History. These can be bound into a book that they can be proud of.

WRITING FROM KEY WORD OUTLINES: The Byzantine Empire

LESSON 2

STRONG VERBS & -LY WORDS

In this lesson, you will continue to practice key word outlining using no more than three key words from each sentence of the source text. The source text is broken into two paragraphs so that you can outline and write one paragraph at a time. **Level A students** may opt to do only one of the paragraphs. But before you outline, let's review the dress-up from Lesson 1 and learn two more.

What dress-up did you learn in Lesson 1? You must include at least one quality adjective in every paragraph you write. Do you remember the boring adjectives that you may not use? Write them on the blanks below. You may look on the back of the STYLISTIC TECHNIQUES page if you need to. Try to memorize them.

STRONG VERBS & -LY WORDS

Now look at the front of the STYLISTIC TECHNIQUES chart. The next two dress-ups listed are STRONG VERBS and -LY WORDS.

A *strong* verb is a word that shows action—it tells what someone or something is doing. Every sentence must have a verb, but just as there are some boring adjectives, there are also many boring verbs. Compare the following sentences. Which have boring verbs? Which have strong verbs?

Justinian came to power.

The city got bigger.

The city went through many attacks.

Justinian rose to power.

The city expanded.

The city endured many attacks.

Look at page 134. Notice the verbs that are banned. Memorize them. Do not use any form of these when you write. There are samples of better substitutes for these verbs on page 136.

-LY WORDS are adverbs. They modify verbs. There is a list of some -ly words on page 137. Can you add one to each of these sentences from above?

The Byzantine Empire expanded _____.

The city _____ endured many attacks.

THE ASSIGNMENT

1. Cut out and learn the vocabulary words for Lesson 2. Add them to your ring.
2. Read THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, Paragraph I, on the following page. Write a key word outline on the blank outline that follows it by choosing three key words from each sentence. Note ideas for quality adjectives, strong verbs, and -ly words at the bottom of the page. Use a thesaurus!
3. Use your outline and ideas to help you write a rough draft paragraph in your own words. Be sure to avoid any banned words, especially the ones in italics in the source text. Be sure to include a quality adjective, strong verb, -ly word, and vocabulary word.

UNDERLINE ONE OF EACH DRESS-UP. In the right margin, write *v-* across from your strong verb, *adj-* across from your quality adjective, *-ly* across from your -ly word, and *voc* across from your vocabulary word.

Here is a sample showing how to label your dress-ups:

Although the Western Roman Empire <u>disintegrated</u> under barbarian attacks,	<i>v-</i>
parts of the Eastern Roman Empire <u>stubbornly</u> resisted. The <u>brave</u> people,	<i>-ly, adj</i>
of what was called the Byzantine Empire, were able to retain the land	
around Constantinople, their capital, and prevent it from being <u>desecrated</u> .	<i>voc</i>

4. **Level B students** repeat steps 2 and 3 with Paragraph II on another day. Before doing so, read and complete page 14, AVOIDING STATE OF BEING VERBS. When you write Paragraph II, be sure not to use any state of being verbs.
5. When you have finished your rough draft, ask your parent to proofread it for you. Then, the next day, write a final draft. Be sure to follow the checklist on page 15.

Note to teacher/parent: *It would be helpful to brainstorm ideas for each of the dress-ups with your students and write the ideas on a whiteboard for them to draw from.*

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE (Paragraph I)

While the Western Roman Empire fell to barbarians, parts of the Eastern Roman Empire withstood attacks. This was the Byzantine Empire. The people there held on to the land around their capital city of Constantinople. Then, in 527, an emperor named Justinian the Great *came* to power. He wanted to restore the greatness of the old Roman Empire. He formed a huge army and *got* back much of the land that had been taken. He *went* through his land and collected Roman laws. He bound them together in a code of fair laws for the entire empire. This *Justinian Code* is the basis for laws in many nations even today.

KEY WORD OUTLINE

I. _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

ADJECTIVE IDEAS

Describe these nouns:

Roman Empire _____

Barbarians _____

Emperor _____

Army _____

STRONG VERBS + -LY WORDS

Replace the boring verbs:

Add -ly words:

(held on) _____

(wanted) _____

(got back) _____

(went) _____

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE (Paragraph II)

Under Justinian the Great, the Byzantine Empire *got bigger*. Constantinople became the *biggest* and *prettiest* city in the world. It had 14 palaces and the *biggest* and *prettiest* church in the world—the Hagia Sophia. In this church there was a huge marble dome surrounded by smaller domes. The ceiling was covered with pure gold that sparkled in the sunlight. The walls were decorated with stones of all different colors. There was not a more beautiful building or city anywhere. But Constantinople *went* through many attacks, and the Byzantine Empire grew and shrank many times. Eventually, in 1453, Constantinople fell to the Turks, and the Byzantine Empire ended.

KEY WORD OUTLINE

- II. _____
- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____

ADJECTIVE IDEAS

What adjectives could describe these nouns:

(See next page for verbs)

- City _____
- Church _____
- Palaces _____
- Empire _____

For Level B Students

AVOIDING STATE OF BEING VERBS

Before you write the second paragraph of the BYZANTINE EMPIRE report, notice that the source text used many state of being verbs. These verbs are forms of *to be*:

is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been

State of being verbs do not show action. They are boring and should be avoided when possible and replaced with verbs that do show action. Sometimes you can simply substitute an action verb for the state of being verb, but other times you may have to rewrite the sentence or even add an idea to it. This is especially true with sentences that use *there* with a state of being verb. Get rid of *there*. Notice the differences in the following pairs of sentences.

There were savage barbarians all around Roman territory.
Savage barbarians surrounded Roman territory.

There was a big mountain outside the city.
A massive mountain towered over the city.

The knight's sword was silver.
The knight's silver sword gleamed in the sun.

There were blue and red jewels on the handle.
The jewels on the handle reflected bursts of blue and red light into the crowd.

Rewrite the following sentences about the Hagia Sophia to include action verbs. Eliminate any state of being verbs.

1. In this church there was a huge marble dome surrounded by smaller domes.
(Hint: Get rid of "there was" and make "marble dome" the subject of the sentence. What is the dome doing?)

2. The ceiling was covered with pure gold that sparkled in the sunlight.

3. The walls were decorated with stones of all different colors.
(Hint: Try making the stones the subject of the sentence. What are they doing?)

4. There was not a more beautiful building or city anywhere.

Name: _____

FINAL CHECKLIST

“The Byzantine Empire”

STRUCTURE

Composition is neat and double-spaced with name (5 pts) _____

STYLE

Each paragraph must contain at least one of each element of style. (Worth 5 pts each)

DRESS-UPS (Underline one of each and label in right margin)

I

II

(Level B)

	I	II
Strong verb (<i>v</i>)		
“ly” word (<i>ly</i>)		
Quality adjective (<i>adj</i>)		
Vocabulary word (<i>voc</i>)		

OTHER

Picture of Hagia Sophia (5 pts) _____

No banned words (-1 pt each) _____

(Level B: Do not use a state of being verb in Par II)

Level A TOTAL _____ / 30 possible

Level B TOTAL _____ / 50 possible

Note to teacher: To grade, note only missing elements by writing the number of points to be deducted in the appropriate space. Then, subtract these points from the total possible.

NARRATIVE STORIES: The Anointing of King Arthur

LESSON 15

THE STORY SEQUENCE CHART

This lesson will help you write interesting stories. Just as in previous lessons, you will be provided with a source text from which to take notes; however, the note taking method will differ. To write stories you will use a note taking method that will help you appreciate the important elements of a story, so that eventually you can use the technique to outline your own stories without a source text. Let's discuss the story sequence chart.

Every story, regardless of how long it is, contains the same basic elements. Stories usually begin by introducing their readers to the time and place of the story; for example, "*Long ago in a kingdom far, far away...*" This is called the **SETTING**. At their beginnings, stories must also introduce their readers to the main people (or animals) of the story—the **CHARACTERS**: "*...there lived a wise king and a beautiful princess.*" And before they dive into the action, stories usually give a little bit of **BACKGROUND** information. These three elements will be found in some form at the beginning of any well-written story.

Then, for a story to be interesting, it must move into the next crucial element—the **CONFLICT**. This is the problem, want, or need of the main character(s). Stories without some sort of problem to overcome, or need to be met, are not very interesting. Most of the action of the story is simply how the conflict is dealt with—what the characters do, say, think, or feel with respect to the conflict. This is known as the **PLOT**.

If there is a conflict or problem, there must be a way to solve it! We call the event that leads to the problem being solved the **CLIMAX** of the story. It is often the most exciting part of the story. We call the result of the climax (how the problem works out) the **RESOLUTION**. One more element of a well-written story is the **THEME** or **MORAL**. The characters and/or the readers should have learned something from the events of the story. A theme or moral gives the story a sense of purpose. Without it, a reader may feel like there was no point to the story. In a fable, morals are stated, but in most stories they are simply implied.

THE ASSIGNMENT

1. Read the first source text, Section I of "The Sword and the Stone." Then fill out the key word outline that follows it. Do not take notes from each sentence. Write notes that answer the story sequence chart questions in the margin of the outline. Questions do not necessarily correspond to lines. One question may take several lines to answer, or one line may be enough for more than one question. (**IMPORTANT NOTE: In the story sequence model, Roman numerals do not necessarily correspond to paragraphs, but to the three main sections of a story:**

I. CHARACTERS & SETTING, II. CONFLICT & PLOT, and III. CLIMAX and RESOLUTION.)

2. Before you write your rough draft, use the brainstorming page (p.75) to help you add elements of style that will make your story more interesting. Then use your outline and the ideas to help you write your own version of this part of the story. Although your outline is brief, you should add plenty of your own details and descriptions. **Be creative and have fun with stories!**

3. On another day, repeat steps 1-2 with SECTION II of the story. ***Level A students may spend a week on each section. (If they are tracking with Level B students, they may omit one of the stories from Lessons 18 - 20 to allow more time for this one.)***

4. Cut out and learn **VOCABULARY** words for Lesson 15. Add similar words. Review all.

Many legends of great heroes were told during the Middle Ages. Some were based on real events and people, but each minstrel who sang of them embellished the truth a bit. The following story is part of one of the most famous legends of the Middle Ages—the legend of King Arthur.

THE SWORD IN THE STONE (I. Characters, Setting, and Background)

It was a cold Christmas morning in Londontown. From all directions, people were streaming to the old church. Among them were Sir Ector, a respected knight, and his two sons, Sir Kay and Arthur. As the people entered the churchyard, the talk was all about Merlin’s prediction. The wizard had said that today, at the church, the rightful king of England might be made known. For years, since the death of King Uther, there had been no king, and no one knew that Uther had had a son—the heir to the throne. No one, that is, except Merlin. This is because shortly before Uther’s death, the wizard had taken the new baby away from danger to be raised by the good Sir Ector and his wife. Now, eighteen years later, this boy, Arthurr, was among the people hoping for a new king to be revealed.

I. SETTING, CHARACTERS, BACKGROUND

- What was the setting? 1. _____
- Describe it. 2. _____
- Who are the characters? 3. _____
- Tell me about them. 4. _____
- Background info 5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

CHECKLIST

DRESS-UPS

___ verb ___ -ly

___ adj ___ w/w

OPENERS

___ #2 ___ #3 ___ #5 ___ #6

___ Three 5-senses words

___ Two vocab words

BRAINSTORMING

When you write a story, remember to use descriptions that appeal to the 5 senses (Review Lesson 5). This is particularly important when describing the setting. To help you, fill out the chart below. What would be seen, heard, or felt in Londontown? Describe each in a way that appeals to the five senses. For example, if you write that you would see *roads*, describe them in a way that tells either what they look like, sound like, or feel like—*crowded*, *cobblestone roads*. Use quality adjectives and strong verbs. Note the examples.

SETTING	SEE?	HEAR?	FEEL?
<p>CHRISTMAS MORNING IN LONDONTOWN</p> <p>(Think about the landscape, buildings, and people)</p>	<p><i>fresh snow covered bare trees</i></p>	<p><i>horses clip-clopped</i></p>	<p><i>air was biting cold</i></p>

In the first section of a story, you should also describe the **CHARACTERS**. Below, write at least two adjectives to describe each of the characters:

SIR ECTOR

ARTHUR

MERLIN

UTHER

THE SWORD IN THE STONE (II. Conflict and Plot)

Of course, every knight desired to be crowned king. The problem was that with no known heir, there had been no way to determine who would serve the country best. This had caused much fighting and division among the people. Everyone hoped that today they would have their rightful king, and peace and happiness would be brought back to the land. So in the church, as the priest spoke, they waited, wondered, and hoped. Suddenly, a great burst of light blazed through the stained glass windows. Everyone rushed outside. To their surprise, a great white marble stone sat in the churchyard. On it was a black anvil, and in the anvil was a glorious, jeweled sword.

The archbishop slowly approached the curious sight. He read the words inscribed in the stone:

*WHOSO PULLETH THE SWORD OUT
OF THIS STONE IS RIGHTWISE
BORN KING OF ENGLAND*

Of course, every knight present tried to pull the sword from the stone. Though they strained with all their might, none succeeded. Arthur watched in amazement, but never even considered trying the feat. He was only 18 years of age and not yet a knight.

“Our king is not here,” announced the archbishop. “We must tell every knight in the land about the sword in the stone.”

II. CONFLICT (PLOT)

- What is the problem? 1. _____
- What did characters 2. _____
- do, 3. _____
- say, 4. _____
- think, 5. _____
- feel? 6. _____
- What happened? 7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

CHECKLIST

DRESS-UPS

___ verb ___ -ly

___ adj ___ w/w

OPENERS

___ #2 ___ #3 ___ #5 ___ #6

___ Three 5-senses words

___ Emotion shown

___ Two vocab

BRAINSTORMING 5 SENSES AND EMOTIONS

Fill in each box and answer each question with as much detail and as many **quality adjectives, strong verbs, and -ly words** as possible. Use another sheet of paper if you need to.

SCENE	SEE	HEAR	FEEL
<p style="text-align: center;">IN THE CHURCH (Before and during the stone's appearance)</p>	<p><i>bright <u>rainbow</u> of colors through the stained glass</i></p>	<p><i>priest droned <u>thunderous</u> crash</i></p>	<p><i>warm air rushed in the <u>wooden</u> pews <u>trembled</u></i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OUTSIDE WITH THE SWORD IN THE STONE</p>	<p><i>jewels <u>sparkled</u></i></p>	<p><i>people <u>gasped</u></i></p>	<p><i>smooth marble <u>icy</u> snow melted</i></p>

Stories are also more interesting when writers **SHOW THE EMOTIONS** of the characters. (Review Lesson 4.) Be sure to do so in your version of “The Sword and the Stone.” Answer the following questions using quality adjectives and strong verbs:

* What emotions did the people feel when the sword in the stone appeared, and how did they show them?

*What emotions did the knights feel when they tried to remove the sword from the stone, and how did they show them?

NARRATIVE STORIES: The Anointing of King Arthur

LESSON 16

THE STORY SEQUENCE CHART, continued

Cut out and learn vocabulary words. Study for VOCABULARY QUIZ 3 next lesson.

In this lesson, you will finish the rough draft of your version of “The Sword in the Stone” with SECTION III—CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION.

THE SWORD IN THE STONE

(III. Climax and Resolution)

It was decided that on New Year’s Day all the knights of England would come to Londontown for a great tournament, after which all would attempt to remove the sword from the stone. So, on New Year’s Day, Sir Ector and Sir Kay headed for Londontown. They brought Arthur to serve as Kay’s squire. They checked into the inn and headed for the tournament. Arthur had to carry Sir Kay’s armor. It was heavy and awkward. As Kay’s turn to fight neared, Arthur helped him on with his armor.

“Now hand me my sword,” he said.

“The sword!” Arthur gasped. “It’s not here. It must be back at the inn.”

“You stupid boy! How can I fight without my sword?” Kay growled. “Hurry and go fetch it!”

Arthur knew there was no time for that, but he was not going to argue with Kay. He jumped on his horse and prayed for help. On the way to the inn, he passed the churchyard and saw the sword in the stone. There was the answer to his dilemma! “I’ll just grab that sword,” he thought.

He hopped off his horse and hastily pulled the sword from the stone, giving no thought to the miracle that had just occurred. He rode to the tournament in time for the match and handed Kay the sword.

“That’s not my sword!” Kay roared. Then he looked at it. “It’s the sword from the stone!” he exclaimed. “How did you get this?”

Arthur explained what he had done. Everyone gathered around.

“The boy is lying,” some said.

So the crowd took Arthur back to the old churchyard. They told Arthur to put the sword back into the stone, which he did easily.

“Out of my way,” shouted Sir Kay as he pushed Arthur aside and tried to pull the sword back out. But it would not budge. Knight after knight tried to dislodge the sword, but it was stuck fast.

“O.K., boy. Now you try,” challenged Kay.

So Arthur reached for the sword and effortlessly pulled it from the stone. At that, all bowed down to him. “Hail to King Arthur,” they said. And happiness was restored to the land that now had its rightful king.

III. CLIMAX & RESOLUTION

What led to the climax? 1. _____

What is the climax? 2. _____

How does it solve 3. _____

the conflict? 4. _____

What is the result? 5. _____

Is there a theme 6. _____

or moral? 7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

CHECKLIST

DRESS-UPS

___ verb ___ -ly

___ adj ___ w/w

OPENERS

___ #2 ___ #3 ___ #5 ___ #6

___ Three 5-senses words

___ Emotion shown

___ Two vocab

BRAINSTORMING 5 SENSES AND EMOTIONS

Answer the following questions with as much detail as possible. Use **QUALITY ADJECTIVES, STRONG VERBS,** and **-LY WORDS** that appeal to the FIVE SENSES.

Find at least three places in this section of the story where you can include descriptions that appeal to one or more of the 5 senses. Write your descriptions below. (For sound, you may include substitutes for “said” if they appeal to the sense of hearing; for example, “Kay growled.”) Some ideas of things to describe are listed below. You can add your own ideas.

Londontown: _____

Kay’s armor: _____

The churchyard: _____

The sword: _____

SHOWING EMOTIONS

*How did Sir Kay feel when he learned that Arthur had forgotten his sword? How did he show his feelings? _____

*How did Arthur feel as he was racing to get the sword? How did his feelings show?

*How did the people feel when Arthur pulled the sword from the stone again, and how did their feelings show? _____

LEVEL A STUDENTS: If you have not yet learned the #2 sentence opener, now is the time to do so. See page 40, then add a prepositional opener to this sentence:

_____ Arthur pulled the sword from the stone.
(Example: *With little effort,*)