

U.S. HISTORY-BASED WRITING LESSONS

Volume 2

in

*Structure, Style, Vocabulary, and
Grammar*

By Lori Verstegen

**Civil War Era–The Present Day
Student Book**

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INTRODUCTION

The *U.S. History-Based Writing Lessons, Volume 2*, is intended for use by junior high and high school students who have already completed *U.S. History-Based Writing Lessons, Volume 1*. If you have not already gone through *Volume 1* and have little or no IEW experience, you should first complete *Volume 1* before attempting this volume. A junior high or high school student should be able to complete *Volume 1* in 14 weeks by following the *Level C* instructions and doing two lessons per week. However, if you already have IEW experience and are familiar with the elements of style and models of structure, *Volume 1* is not necessary, due to the fact that *Volume 2* does review the important concepts taught in *Volume 1*.

The Student Book & Resource Notebook

The Student Book: The bulk of this Student Book contains the lesson pages, source texts, and checklists for each assignment. The back contains an appendix of student sample compositions. It also contains a sheet of vocabulary cards for most of the lessons. The lessons will instruct you when to cut out each sheet. You will be required to learn these words and use some in every composition you write for this class. You will also be quizzed over them periodically.

The Resource Notebook (RN): While going through *Volume 1*, most of this notebook should have been assembled—from the *Student Resource Notebook* e-book available at www.excellenceinwriting.com. You should complete this notebook at the beginning of this course by inserting the remaining pages behind the appropriate tabs. (You will not need the checklists, pages 94–109.)

If you did not already begin the notebook, you will need a one-inch three-ring binder with eight divider tabs labeled as follows: *verbs, -ly, adj, senses/emo, dec's, transition, grammar, and charts*. Print the Resource Notebook pages from the website above and place them behind the appropriate tabs in the notebook. (You will not need the checklists, pages 94–109.)

Supplies

In addition to the Student Book and Resource Notebook, you should bring the following materials to every class:

**A one-inch three-ring binder with four divider tabs labeled notes, rough drafts, vocabulary, and paper. You should also have a three-hole-punched folder (or pocket divider) to place in the binder for storing your final drafts. This will keep them neat and will allow you to store them without having to hole-punch them, which will make spiral binding them easier at the end of the year.*

*A *thesaurus* such as *The Synonym Finder* by Rodale or a quality electronic thesaurus

A Personal Book Of American History

In this course, all of the writing topics will focus on American History from the Civil War to present day. You should save your final drafts so that at the end of the year you can have them bound into your own personal book of American History. For this reason, the assignments ask you to illustrate much of your work. If you do, and also make your final drafts as neat as possible, you will have a finished product you can be proud of.

OVERVIEW OF STYLE: North versus South

LESSON 1 QUALITY DRESS-UPS

The Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) teaches students to write with structure and style. Since these lessons are designed for students experienced in the IEW method, it is assumed that you have already been using some of the models of structure and elements of style taught by IEW, but we will review and refine them in this course.

We will begin with the elements of style. Elements of style are grouped into three categories: *dress-ups*, *sentence openers*, and *decorations*. This lesson reviews the three most basic dress-ups: *quality* adjectives, *strong* verbs, and *purposeful* -ly words. At least one of each will be required in every paragraph you write. It is easy to become lazy when including these in your writing, so the point of this lesson will be to remind you that not any adjective, verb, or -ly word will do. The emphasis should be on *quality*, *strength*, and *purpose*.

Verbs And Adjectives

Volume 1 banned or asked you to avoid several boring verbs and adjectives. These will continue to be banned. They are listed in your Resource Notebook on page 6, after the Stylistic Techniques page. Read over the banned verbs: *go, went, come, came, say, said, get, got, see, look*. Now the banned adjectives: *good, bad, nice, mean, pretty, ugly, big, a lot, interesting*. Remember that you should always try to use verbs and adjectives that most clearly and vividly communicate your ideas. The verbs and adjectives tabs in your Resource Notebooks have lists of many acceptable words that can replace the banned words. It is important that you use them.

-LY Words

Adverbs (-ly words) can be used to modify or intensify both verbs and adjectives, but caution should be used when choosing them. First, they must add to the ideas being communicated, not distract from them. Do not randomly choose -ly words just to meet the checklist requirement! For example, look at the sentences below:

In 1819, Missouri *amazingly* applied to become part of the United States.

At that time, the number of free states *totally* equaled the number of slave states.

Because Missouri wanted to be a slave state, *surprisingly* many debates erupted in Congress.

Do the -ly words help convey the ideas the writer intends to communicate, or are they unnecessary? Which one actually distracts from the intended meaning?

Another potential problem is that if -ly words are used too frequently, or with strong verbs or adjectives, they may actually rob the strong words of their power. This is particularly true with the -ly words and other adverbs used to intensify. For this reason, two of these kinds of adverbs will be banned: really and very. Add these two words to your Banned Words list in the Resource Notebook (page 6).

Behind the -LY tab of your Resource Notebook, you should have placed a list of substitutes for really and very. (Even though *very* does not end in -ly, it is an adverb and can, therefore, be replaced with a variety of -ly words.)

Similar -ly words that must be used cautiously include: *truly, extremely, completely, totally, positively, perfectly, and absolutely*. Note how they are unnecessary with the following quality adjectives and actually take away from the power of them:

very exhausted
extremely ravenous
totally ecstatic

Intensifying -ly words are better used to help weak verbs or adjectives for which you cannot find a stronger synonym. It is better, though, to search for one precise, powerful verb or adjective. Let's practice this.

What single *adjective* could you use in place of the following phrases?

Very bad: _____

Truly sorry: _____

Extremely happy: _____

Very tired: _____

Really careful: _____

What single *precise verb* could you use in place of these phrases?

Ran very quickly: _____

Drank really fast: _____

Spoke extremely quietly: _____

Read really closely: _____

As you write from now on, if you are tempted to use really or very, try one of two things instead. First, use your thesaurus (or word lists in your Resource Notebook) to try to find a stronger verb or adjective than the one you want to place very or really in front of. If you cannot find a suitable one, then use the really/very list on page 27 of your Resource Notebook for a better adverb.

THE ASSIGNMENT

1. Do the Practice Avoiding Boring Words exercise below.
2. Review Grammar Rules 1a–f in the Resource Notebook (pages 56 and 58). Then complete the Comma Rules Worksheet on page 57.

(There are no vocabulary words to allow you to review *Volume 1* words.)

PRACTICE AVOIDING BORING WORDS

Rewrite the following two paragraphs, replacing italicized words and phrases with strong verbs, quality adjectives, and/or purposeful -ly words. Try to avoid using words such as really or very. Do not use any banned words. (If you have already learned IEW dress-ups and openers, add them.)

Give your work a creative title by repeating or reflecting some of the key words of the final clincher (last sentence) in the title.

NORTH VERSUS SOUTH

In the mid-1800's America was *really growing fast*, but it was growing apart. The South and the North had *very different* economies, which caused disagreements to develop between them.

Most significantly, the South's economy was predominantly agricultural. Cotton, tobacco, and sugar cane were grown on *very big* plantations that *truly needed* slave labor in order to make a *good* profit. Even though some prominent Southern leaders felt *very bad* about slavery at first, they continued to own slaves because there was no other way to affordably harvest the *big* amount of crops. Over time, slavery *got* accepted as *very necessary* to the Southern way of life.

The North, on the other hand, had no *big* plantations. People made their living on relatively small farms. Family members did most of the work and did not need help, nor could they afford to house and feed slaves. The North was also *getting* industrial. *A lot* of factories were being built to make things such as iron, steel, machinery, and cloth. Because they did not need slave labor, most Northerners were *really opposed* slavery. They considered it *very wrong* and believed it was *really against* the principles of American democracy. The *bad* disagreements over slavery began to divide the nation.

LESSON 15 DECORATIONS: QUESTIONS AND COMMANDS WRITING PERSUASIVELY

New Decorations: Questions And Commands

In this lesson you will use two new decorations. Both are actually techniques that you may have used as dramatic openers, but each may be used anywhere in a paragraph. They are the *Question* and the *Command*. They are explained on page 43 of your Resource Notebook. Study the page.

The New Prompt

In this lesson, you will begin another essay related to the Age of Industry. Here is the prompt:

Pretend you are an inventor. You have just designed an amazing invention. In hopes of having your creation funded and marketed, you enter it in the First Annual Invention Convention of (your city). As an entrant, you must write a four-paragraph essay describing your invention. The purpose of the essay is to persuade a panel of judges that your invention is something almost everyone will want or need. The judges will choose three to be manufactured and marketed.

To write this essay, follow the steps you learned in Lesson 14. They are listed in the box on page 79. Also, use the blank outline on page 88.

Your thesis statement will be something like, *People will want (or need) _____, so it must be on the market soon.* The topics of your body paragraphs, then, should be two reasons people would want your invention. They could be two characteristics of the invention, two uses, what it does and when/where it would be needed, or similar.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Who could benefit from the invention? Why?
- What characteristics make it so great?
- Why would someone need it? Example.
- When would someone need or appreciate it? Example.
- How would someone feel using it? Why?
- How does it work?
- Where would it be most useful?

The Assignment

1. Think of an invention to write about in response to the prompt on page 85. Before you begin outlining your essay, read page 87, Persuasive Writing. Write ideas for including some of the persuasive techniques:

What situations could you include that would appeal to your readers' emotions and make them want your product?

Can you think of quality adjectives and strong verbs that will put your invention in a positive light?

What about quality adjectives and strong verbs to put the competition in a negative light?

How can you include the new decorations (questions and commands)?

2. Outline and write the *two* body paragraphs (rough draft) of an essay responding to the prompt. Follow steps 1–4 in the Writing An Essay box (page 79). Fill out the blank outline (body paragraphs and thesis statement only) on page 88.

3. As you write, try to use some of the persuasive techniques. Include specific details. Appeal to emotions by writing about situations people can relate to. Use strong verbs and quality adjectives to describe your invention positively and alternatives negatively.

4. Cut out and learn the vocabulary words for Lesson 15. Review all words. Which vocabulary words might work well in your essay? List at least three in a sentence that you could use in your essay.

Persuasive Writing

For writing to be persuasive, it must be logical and believable. Points should be supported with specific details, examples, and facts that support them. Vague generalizations should be avoided.

Vague: The solar powered car will save you money.

Specific: The average motorist spends at least \$40 per fill-up at the pump. Filling up just two to three times a month could easily add up to over \$1000 a year! But with the solar powered car, that is money that will stay in your pocket.

Good persuasive writing should also appeal to the readers' emotions. One way to accomplish this is to use anecdotes or examples that readers can identify with. For example:

Have you ever been stuck in traffic? Doesn't it seem that most often it happens when you are in a hurry, and there you are, trapped in a sea of cars with no way of escape?

Strong verbs and adjectives that bolster your side of the argument and diminish the opposing side will also make your writing more persuasive. Look at the pair of sentences below. Which is more persuasive?

1. People should not eat fast food. Our "Minute Meals" are more healthful.
2. Why resort to high-calorie, no-nutrition fast food when "Minute Meals" provide a myriad of delicious, nutritious lunches and dinners at the simple press of a button?

Study the following excerpts from student essays. Note the specific details, the appeals to emotions, and the strong verbs and adjectives. Which ones also use our new decorations (questions or commands)?

Are you tired of having to constantly clean your room? Does it seem that you can't keep up with the clutter because there is just no place to put it all? The incredible shrinking machine can solve that annoying problem. Simply push a button, shrink the unsightly mess, and toss it into a drawer. Your room will never have to be messy again.

On a hot, humid day none of today's primitive clothes are comfortable. T-shirts, dresses, and even shorts become sticky with perspiration and seem to suffocate their helpless wearer. But the innovative climate control clothes are different. Even on the sultriest day they will keep you cool, comfortable, and dry.

Don't force students to waste another day laboring over a boring textbook. Don't make them spend another minute on tedious attempts at memorizing useless information just to pass a test. Make it possible for them to implant the amazing K-chip in their brains and give them a wealth of knowledge—painlessly.

You should **copy** this outline as you will add to it in Lesson 17.

Five-Paragraph Essay: Key Word Outline

I. INTRODUCTION

- Opener 1. _____
- Background 2. _____
- Topic A 3. _____
- Topic B 4. _____
- Topic C 5. _____

THESIS STATEMENT: 6. _____

For ideas, ask questions:

WHO? WHAT?

WHEN? WHERE?

WHY? HOW?

HOW FEEL ABOUT?

BEST/WORST THING

Remember plenty of

Good DEED's:

Details

Examples

Explanations

Descriptions

II. TOPIC SENTENCE A: _____

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

Clincher: _____

III. TOPIC SENTENCE B: _____

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

Clincher: _____

IV. TOPIC SENTENCE C: _____

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

Clincher: _____

V. CONCLUSION

RESTATE THESIS 1. _____

Topic A 2. _____

Topic B 3. _____

Topic C 4. _____

Most Significant / WHY? 5. _____

Reflect opening 6. _____

TITLE IDEA (Reflect words from last line): _____

ROUGH CHECKLIST (Two Body Paragraphs)

Thesis statement (before first paragraph) _____

STRUCTURE

Paragraphs are neat and *double-spaced* with name _____

Each paragraph has a *topic sentence* (Key words highlighted) _____

Each paragraph ends with a *clincher*
(Words reflected from the topic sentence are highlighted) _____

Details in each paragraph support the topic _____

STYLE

DRESS-UPS (Choose and underline five. Label in the right margin) I II

Strong verb (<i>v</i>)		
“Iy” word (<i>ly</i>)		
Quality adjective (<i>adj</i>)		
w/w clause		
www.asia.because clause (<i>cl</i>)		
Dual v, -ly, or adj (<i>2x</i>)		
Vocabulary word (<i>voc</i>)		

SENTENCE OPENERS (Choose four. Number each in the left margin)

#2 prepositional phrase		
#3 “Iy”		
#4, “-ing”		
#5, www.asia.because clause		
#6 vss (2–5 words)		

OTHER

Decorations: Question And Command _____

Persuasive techniques used _____

Grammar rules followed _____

No banned words _____

Do not say “you” or “your”, unless referring to the reader _____

CREATIVE WRITING: The Age of Industry (continued)

LESSON 16
INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS
THESIS STATEMENTS

In this lesson you must add an introduction and conclusion to the three body paragraphs you wrote in Lesson 14 (page 79) about an invention you would not want to do without. Open your Resource Notebook to the Models of Structure and find the model for a basic report/essay (page 10). This model lists the basic elements that should be present in an introductory paragraph: something that grabs the readers' attention and introduces the subject, some background information, and a mention of each of the topics.

Now add one more requirement to the end of the introduction—a *thesis statement*. Write "Thesis Statement" directly under "State three topics."

"Thesis statement" sounds like a complicated thing, but it is not. It is simply a statement of the main idea of your essay—the underlying theme that dictates the details you will choose for your essay. Everything you write in the essay should *support* your thesis statement. When you are writing an essay in which you are expressing your opinion, it is particularly important to formulate and include a thesis statement. Most often a thesis statement is placed at the end of the introduction.

The procedure for writing an introduction that you will learn today works particularly well when you must write with a time limit, such as for a standardized test. In such a situation, you cannot spend a lot of time laboring over a dramatic opening. A quick way to create one is to simply reflect the background ideas in the prompt. These ideas can be used as the opening and background information.

The Assignment

1. Take out your outline (copied from page 80) and three body paragraphs (rough draft) for your essay about an invention you would not want to do without. Then, turn to page 79 in this book and reread the prompt. Write the key ideas of the prompt under Roman numeral I of your outline on the "Opener" and "Background" lines (i.e., 1. "Age of Industry" = many machines 2. today, society, dependent, myriad).

2. Write key words for each of your topics on the three "Topic" lines. For example, if you wrote about the telephone: A. phone, fast communication, B. special features = convenient, C. no, adequate, substitute.

3. Add your thesis statement (i.e., I would not want to do without a telephone.)

4. Use your outline to guide you in writing an introduction.

5. To outline a conclusion for your essay, begin by rewording the thesis statement (i.e., Life without a telephone would be difficult).

6. Under each of the “Topic” lines, write key words to help you summarize the main idea of each of your body paragraphs. Try to use different words than you used in the introduction (i.e., A. phone, quick access, B. myriad features= easy to use, C. nothing can replace).

7. The most difficult part of the conclusion is next. You must tell what is most significant or most important about your subject and why. When trying to determine this, consider your thesis and ask yourself things like: Why does it matter? What are the implications? Your answer could be one of your topics, but it is better to think of something that encompasses all of your topics (i.e., The phone is the only fast, convenient way to stay connected with the important people in my life. It allows me to build and strengthen relationships.)

8. End the outline with key words that reflect the idea of your opening (i.e., “Age of Industry,” machines).

9. Use your outlines to write a rough introduction and conclusion.

10. Read over “Polishing the Rough Draft,” page 93, and follow the instructions to improve the rough draft of your essay.

11. Write a final draft of your essay, beginning with the introduction and ending with the conclusion. Follow the final checklist on page 95 carefully.

12. Cut out and learn the vocabulary words for Lesson 16. Study all words from Lessons 1–16 for a quiz next class.

Contest: Who can use the most vocabulary words in their essay? Underline and label all of the vocabulary words you use.

POLISHING THE ROUGH DRAFT

Once you have your ideas down in a rough draft, look for ways to improve your essay and make it more interesting. Remember good *deed*'s. Additionally, look for places to try the following:

1. Be sure you have *not repeated* the same key word too frequently.

Check to see that you have not used the name of the invention repeatedly. Brainstorm synonyms for it, and try putting adjectives with the synonyms. Can you create some alliterations?

Adjective
ingenious
marvelous

Machine
invention
machine

Adjective
great
invaluable

Machine
gadget
device

2. Add more detail, especially descriptions that appeal to the five senses or emotions

Rough: Cars are comfortable. They have air conditioners, heaters, and radios. Some even have TV's.

With details/description: Cars are comfortable. The air conditioner in my van allows me to escape a scorching hot day and ride cool and content. And if the day happens to be freezing cold, that is not a problem either. A simple push of a button makes the ride warm and cozy. As I travel, I can surround myself with my favorite music or put in a DVD for entertainment. The stresses of the day are lost inside this amazing machine.

Rough: The phone is a fast way to reach my friends. We plan what we want to do.

With details/description: The phone is a fast way to reach my friends. I simply push a few buttons, and within a few seconds I hear a familiar voice. We talk and laugh together. We plan what we want to do.

3. Show emotions, don't just tell about them.

Rough: I have fun when I watch TV.

Show the emotions: I laugh. I yell. Sometimes I even cry. I am totally absorbed in another world, away from the problems of the day and the boredom of my routine.

4. Add specific examples.

Rough: Cameras allow me to have visual memories of the important events in my life.

Add examples: One of my favorite pictures is of me holding my new baby brother. When I look at it, I remember how excited I was when he was born. I remember how proud I felt that Mom trusted me enough to put him in my arms. I remember thinking, "Now I'm a big brother!"

Rough: Cars make long-distance traveling feasible.

Add examples: Every Christmas my family can travel halfway across the country to see our relatives. And we can do it in less than 20 hours. As we ride in the comfort of our van, I can't help but wonder what it must have been like for the pioneers who crossed the miles and miles of desert in covered wagons. I'm sure they lost contact with the relatives they left behind.

FINAL CHECKLIST

An Indispensable Invention

Title reflects final clincher

(2 pts) _____

I. INTRODUCTION

- Attention Grabber (Dramatic Opener) (2 pts) _____
- Subject/Background Info (2 pts) _____
- Three Topics (*Label A, B, C in left margin*) (6 pts) _____
- Four dress-ups/Two openers (6 pts) _____
- Thesis statement (5 pts) _____

THREE BODY PARAGRAPHS

Each paragraph has a *topic sentence* (Key words highlighted) (9 pts) _____

Details in each paragraph support the topic (6 pts) _____

Each paragraph ends with a *clincher*
(Words reflected from the topic sentence are highlighted) (6 pts) _____

Each paragraph must contain at least one of each element of style. (1 pt each)

DRESS-UPS (Underline five per paragraph and label in the right margin) II III IV

Strong verb (<i>v</i>)			
“ly” word (<i>ly</i>)			
Quality adjective (<i>adj</i>)			
Who/Which clause (<i>w/w</i>)			
www.asia.b/c clause (<i>cl</i>)			
Dual adj, verbs, or -ly (2x)			
Vocabulary word (<i>voc</i>) <i>Label all for contest!</i>			

SENTENCE OPENERS (Number four per paragraph in the left margin)

#2 prepositional phrase			
#3 “ly”			
#4 “-ing”			
#5 “because” clause			
#6 vss (2–5 words)			

V. CONCLUSION

- Restate *thesis statement* (Use different words) (3 pts) _____
- Restate three topics (Label A, B, C in left margin) (3 pts) _____
- Four dress-ups/Two openers (6 pts) _____
- Most significant & why (5 pts) _____
- Final clincher (highlight words that reflect the opening) (3 pts) _____

Two Decorations (6 pts) _____

No banned words/Grammar rules (-1 ea) _____

TOTAL _____ / 100