

PARENT EXPLANATION PACKET

Welcome to The Writing Academy®, LLC Family

A plain-language guide to how your student's writing curriculum is organized, what it teaches, and how it all connects, with a link to each piece so you can see it for yourself.

Welcome. If your student's classroom uses The Writing Academy®, you have joined a family of students, teachers, and families who all work from the same yearlong plan for growing a confident writer. This packet is written for you, the parent or family member, and it walks through everything your student will experience this year: how the year is organized, the small set of frameworks your student will hear again and again, the workbooks and songs and stories that carry the learning, and the ways you can support all of it from home.

Every part named below links to the live page where you can see it yourself. Click any underlined link to open that page.

You can always start from the **home dashboard** or the **Course Overview**, which lays out the whole curriculum at a glance.

How the Year Is Organized

The Writing Academy is a supplemental writing curriculum that stands beside your student's regular reading and language arts core. It is offered for Grades 3 through 5, and each grade follows the same shape: a Prepare cluster, followed by eight numbered Clusters, and each cluster is made up of four modules. In all, that is nine clusters and thirty six modules across the year. Every module runs for one school week, five short days, so a student always knows where the week is headed. You can see your student's grade level page here: [Grade 3](#), [Grade 4](#), or [Grade 5](#).

The Prepare cluster teaches a student how to choose the right genre before writing a single word. Clusters 1 through 5 then build informational writing step by step, from a short response up through comparing two texts together. Clusters 6 through 8 open up the most independent work of the year: an argument, a poem or story, and a research paper. The full year by year plan is laid out in the [Scope and Sequence](#).

The Daily Lesson Path: GRADUATE

Every module, in every grade, runs on the same eight step daily lesson path, called **GRADUATE**. The letters stand for Gather, Reveal, Attempt, Discuss, Use, Award, Target, and Educate or Explain, roughly twenty minutes a day across the five day week. Because the same path repeats module after module, one week closes and the next opens with a new passage and a slightly bigger task, which is why the site calls it the GRADUATE Infinity Learning Cycle. You can read the full walk through here: [GRADUATE Infinity Learning Cycle](#), and see how that cycle adds up across the whole year here: [GRADUATE Infinity Journey](#).

The Frameworks Your Student Will Hear

Rather than teaching a new vocabulary word for every skill, The Writing Academy uses a small set of frameworks that repeat all year, so a student builds real fluency with each one instead of relearning new terms every module. Here are the frameworks named on the site that your student is likely to bring home.

The Five Thinking Levels

One color coded scale runs through every module, from Foundational, to Emergent, to Visible, to Independent, and finally Reflective. It shows a student exactly what getting stronger looks like, module after module. Read more on the **GRADUATE Infinity Journey** page.

Thesis (Central Idea)

A thesis (central idea) is the student's own point about a topic. The song **Three Pieces to a Thesis** breaks it into three parts a student can find and build every time.

TRACKS

TRACKS names six kinds of evidence a student can pull from a text to support an answer, giving young writers a shared checklist for finding proof. Hear it on the **Leave Some TRACKS** song page.

TREES

TREES is the shape of a strong essay from top to tail: Thesis, Reasons, Evidence, Explanation, and Significance. It is taught through the **TREES song** and carried through the workbooks.

CSI

CSI stands for Connect, Support, and Infer, the three checks a student uses to choose strong evidence: it connects to the prompt, supports the thesis (central idea), and lets the reader infer more. Hear it on the **CSI: Evidence Is on the Way** song page.

DEEP FACTS

DEEP FACTS names the moves that build a strong explanation of evidence, so a student remembers what to include when writing to inform. Hear it on the **Deep Facts** song page.

These frameworks are not separate worksheets. They show up together, in the same passage and the same week, which is the whole idea behind the curriculum's design. You can see how each piece of a lesson connects to the others on the **Writing Academy Ecosystem Guide**.

Student Workbooks

Each cluster has its own Interactive Student Workbook. This is the student's own side of the daily lesson: the reading, the evidence work, and the written response for that module, matched to what the teacher is teaching that week. Grade 3's workbooks, organized cluster by cluster, are viewable here: **Grade 3 Student Interactive Workbooks**. Grade 4 and Grade 5 each have their own matching set, reachable from the **Grade 4** and **Grade 5** pages.

Songs and Music

Music is used to make the writing process stick. Each song takes one step, habit, or skill and turns it into something a student can hum on the way to a desk, whether it is choosing evidence with CSI, building a thesis (central idea), or sweeping a draft clean during editing. The full collection, with lyrics for every song, is here: **The Writing Process Song Collection**. The collection also includes the Big Word Detective set, songs that teach prefixes, roots, and suffixes for building vocabulary.

Learning Literature

Learning Literature is the curriculum's own library of original stories, written so a student reads for the fun of the story while the craft underneath does quiet teaching, building vocabulary, comprehension, and a real love of reading. The collection includes an animated excerpt called The Goosebottom Gazette, a page turning, read aloud shelf called the Penny Books, and an illustrated chapter series that follows a young writer named Penny through one writing skill per book. You can explore all of it here: **Learning Literature**.

Family Connection Activities, in English and Spanish

Every module sends home one short Family Connection, in both English and Spanish, so a family can talk through the week's writing idea together in a five minute conversation, never a pile of homework. Each one names what the class is learning, gives a simple thing to notice together, offers a question to talk about, suggests a no materials activity, and shows how to help without giving away the answer. The Grade 3 set is here: **Grade 3 Homework Connection**, and Grade 4 and Grade 5 each have their own matching set from their grade pages. The whole idea of the Parent and Family Portal, the bridge from the classroom to your kitchen table, is introduced here: **Parent and Family Portal**.

Content Language Support for English Learners

For students who are still learning English, every reading passage is available with Content Language Support: the same rich, grade level passage the whole class reads, with the important words made tappable. A single tap shows a clear picture of the word, so a student can keep up with grade level text without a separate, simplified version. You can see how it works and open sample passages here: **Content Language Support**. Supports for other learners, including scaffolds teachers use in class, are gathered here: **Supports for All Learners**.

Assessments

The curriculum uses a shared set of assessments to show what a student understands and to name the next teaching step, all measured against the same five level thinking ladder described above. Three diagnostics, one each for informational, narrative, and argumentative writing, place a student on that ladder before instruction begins, and a companion tool tracks the student's movement up the ladder across the year. Each cluster also has its own assessment tied to that cluster's passage and writing task. You can see the full set, by grade, here: **Assessments**.

How It All Connects, and Why

Every lesson in The Writing Academy grows from one passage and one prompt, and every piece described above, the teacher's daily plan, the student workbook, the slide deck, the songs, the assessment, and the Family Connection, all point back to that same text. A family can use one piece or lean on the whole set, and because everything stays connected to the same passage, the thread never gets lost during the week. This is why the curriculum is built the way it is: a student does not learn a skill once and move on, but hears the same handful of frameworks, TRACKS, TREES, CSI, DEEP FACTS, and the thinking levels, again and again, in a new passage each week, until using them becomes second nature. You can see this whole picture laid out in one place on the **Writing Academy Ecosystem Guide**.

THE DESTINATION

By the end of the year, a student is writing independent, multi source responses and can name and defend their own thinking. The GRADUATE cycle repeats the same dependable path all year, a little higher each time, until that kind of independence is the ordinary result.

How Families Can Help at Home

- Open your student's Family Connection each week and spend five minutes talking through it together. Start with the **Parent and Family Portal**, or go straight to your grade's page, such as the **Grade 3 Homework Connection**.
- Ask your student to explain a framework in their own words, such as what TREES stands for, or what CSI means when they find evidence in a text. Naming it out loud is part of how it sticks.
- Listen to a song together from the **Song Collection**, and ask your student what skill it is teaching.

- Read a story from **Learning Literature** together, and talk about a new word your student noticed.
- If you have a question the Family Connection does not answer, the **Frequently Asked Questions** page covers many common ones, or you can reach out through the dashboard's contact information.

Thank you for being part of your student's writing year. The whole system was built so that school and home can pull in the same direction, one passage and one prompt at a time, all year long. Welcome, again, to The Writing Academy®, LLC family.

Quick Reference: Where to Find Everything

Topic	Page
Home dashboard	index.html
Course Overview	course-overview.html
Scope and Sequence	scope-and-sequence.html
Writing Academy Ecosystem Guide	ecosystem-guide.html
GRADUATE Infinity Learning Cycle	graduate-infinity-learning-cycle.html
GRADUATE Infinity Journey	graduate-infinity-journey.html
Grade 3 Materials	g3.html
Grade 4 Materials	g4.html
Grade 5 Materials	g5.html
Grade 3 Student Workbooks	g3-student-workbooks.html
Songs (Writing Process Song Collection)	songs.html
Song: Three Pieces to a Thesis	song-thesis.html
Song: Leave Some TRACKS	song-tracks.html
Song: TREES	song-trees.html
Song: CSI, Evidence Is on the Way	song-csi.html
Song: Deep Facts	song-deep-facts.html
Learning Literature	learning-literature.html
Parent and Family Portal	parent-portal.html
Grade 3 Homework Connection	g3-homework-connection.html
Content Language Support	content-language-support.html
Supports for All Learners	supports-for-all-learners.html
Assessments	assessments.html
Frequently Asked Questions	faq.html