Page
Lesson Descriptions

Jerry B. Jenkins Christian Writers Guild

Unit I

1. Me? A Writer?

Yes! You're staring at a piece of paper thinking, Maybe others can learn to write like a pro, but not me. It's too hard. Relax! Writing isn't rocket science. Learn how easy and fun it is to start.

2. Getting Started

And... they're off! Did you know writing actually starts way before you begin to put words on paper or a computer screen? Learn the habits of good writers and how to set up your writing place and.

3. Riting 2day

So many styles, so little time. There are almost as many kinds of writing as there are people? Each type of writing has its own style. Learn the differences between email, texting, and standard writing, fiction and nonfiction, poetry and prose, journalism, chat, and more.

4. What's a Paragraph?

Sure this is basic; that's why it's lesson 4. You know what a paragraph is, right? They're five sentences long. Or are they four? Or, wait—three? Well, they can't be just one sentence—can they? Find out what a paragraph is and what makes a good one.

5. Picture This, Part 1

Lights, camera, action. A good movie pulls you into the action. You hear it and see it. You scream. And if nobody's looking, you might cry. (Come on, admit it—we all do.) Learn to use movie-making techniques to write great descriptions of objects, pets, seasons, foods, and more.

6. Picture This, Part 2

I'm ready for my close-up! For this lesson you'll build on what you've learned—and crank it up a notch. Instead of describing objects, you'll learn how to write about people.

7. And Then and Then...

What comes after step one? Maybe you never thought about it, but some people make their living writing instructions. No kidding! Now you get a chance to become a sequence expert, too. Learn to explain a process and put the steps in the right order.

8. Just the Facts, Ma'am

Yeah, but what's the big picture? Beyond just describing a pet or person, learn to show what happens when that pet or person gets tangled in real life.

9. Words on Deadline

Seek the truth and report it accurately. Newspaper articles are written with a different style than a story, poem, or anything else. To write news, you'll need to master the art of the pointy-side-down pizza. Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Learn to write like a reporter, and all your writing will improve.

10. Research Around Town

Find something worth writing about. Every writing teacher hears from students: "I don't know what to write about!" Well, help is on the way. In this lesson you'll learn to find article and story ideas all around you.

Unit II

11. Ready, Set...

Pull over, I think we're lost... A story map can show you where you're going. Story maps are great tools, but not everyone uses the same kind. Learn to create one that works for you.

12. First Draft

Write now, edit later. Your first draft sometimes turns out pretty good—but most of the time, not so much. You'll need to go back and work on it. Learn to stay fresh, not get bogged down, and keep your creative spark alive while writing a first draft.

13. Putting it all Together

Look how far you've come! Now that you've flown through 12 lessons, it's time to look over what you've learned. Review the skills you've developed and pinpoint areas you need to work harder on—unless you're perfect (Hint: You're not).

14. Planting Time

Water your writing seeds. Watching plants grow is great fun, don't you think? Kind of like watching paint dry—yawn. But story seeds can be exciting. Everyone's life contains seeds that can grow everyday stuff into exciting stories. Learn to nurture those seeds.

15. Dear Sir or Madam

Do letters even exist anymore? Say your best friend moves away and you want to keep in touch. You need to know how to write a letter. Encouraging others through writing letters can be one of the most important lessons we learn. Learn to do it right.

16. Rhymin' Simon

You're a poet, but don't know it. Did you know poetry is one of the most popular kinds of writing? Even today! Learn to dig deeper and fill your poetry with description and emotion.

17. Writing @ School

Get the gist of it. Maybe you didn't think you'd learn this in a writing course, but it all goes together. Sooner or later, you'll have to learn how to take notes. Once you do, you can use those notes to get better grades.

18. You Can Say That Again!

Make your characters come alive with dialogue—conversations in writing—one of the best tools you have. Funny thing is, nobody talks about it much, and that's too bad, because every beginning writer wrestles with it. Learn to write dialogue that makes your characters sound real.

19. 'What If' and 'History'

Take your readers back in time. Who hasn't dreamed of stepping into a time machine, setting the dial, and ... zoop! You're there! Back to the Civil War, Colonial days, or with Christopher Columbus. You can write a story that will take readers back to whenever you decide. Learn to transport readers through writing historical fiction.

20. Who's on First?

Pick the person to tell your story. Chances are, you've never thought about what writers call point of view. But before this lesson is over, you'll be an expert. Learn what it is and how it works.

Unit III

21. Meet My Imaginary Friend, Part 1

It's all about your characters. Think about your characters before you put them into action. Sure, plot is important, but you have to know who you're writing about before you decide what happens to them. Stories are about people. Learn to create characters that drive your plot.

22. Meet My Imaginary Friend, Part 2

How do your characters change? You've learned about building characters, now find out how to create round (instead of flat) characters. Follow an easy checklist to learn the basics.

23. Plots Aren't Just in Cemeteries, Part 1

Every story needs a good plot. How do you put together a story? What are the building blocks? Learn the four essential parts of every good plot.

24. Plots Aren't Just in Cemeteries, Part 2

You understand what a plot is, now put one together. If you're going to write a good story, you have to dig a little deeper. Got your shovel? Look at some classic plots—then dig your own.

25. Jesus the Storyteller

What is a parable, anyway? Parables are stories, only a little different. Parables teach a lesson—with extra punch. Learn storytelling tips from the Master Storyteller (that's Jesus) and see how His stories came alive for the people around Him.

26. Play it Again, Sam, Part 1

It's time to rewrite. You've written a story or two as you've completed your exercises, but you've not had to rewrite your work. Now that changes. Learn to review your story, find areas to change, and jazz it up.

27. Play it Again, Sam, Part 2 [ditto]

It's time to rewrite—again! Good editors know how to fix what's wrong—spelling, grammar, and all that. But great editors know how to take good writing and make it really good. Learn the secrets of the best editors, and take your writing from so-so to super.

28. Play it Again, Sam, Part 3 [ditto]

Seriously, rewrite it again! Writing is one-fourth writing and three fourths editing. The more you know about editing, the better you get as a writer. Guaranteed. Wrap up the secrets of the best editors and build them into your writing and editing process.

29. Wrap This Puppy Up

It all comes down to this. Endings are tricky, no doubt. But they're important! Without a great ending, the rest of your work is wasted. Learn what makes a great ending and how to finish your stories with pizzazz.

30. Did You Hear the One About...?

It may be funny, but humor is serious. "You write funny." No, we don't mean you're writing with your toes. Funny, as in, ha-ha. Learn all about funny—and use it in your stories.

31. Biography

Tell someone's life story. They don't have to come with a snooze button. Even if a person wasn't rich or famous, you can write an interesting biography about them. Learn to tell someone else's story—and make it interesting.

32. Book Reviews

I laughed. I cried. It moved me. Book reviews can be mean and nasty or nice and fair. Guess which kind you'll learn to write? Learn to turn your reading into writing by telling others—constructively and fairly—about what you read.

33. It's a Mystery

Write a whodunit. Everybody likes a mystery, right? They have action, tension, and are sometimes scary. Learn what makes a good mystery and … (see the lesson for the rest).

34. Once Upon a Time, in a Far-away Galaxy...

Turn your imagination loose. Fantasy has weird or made-up characters and places, doing things people normally can't. Learn what makes a good fantasy or sci-fi story and how you can write one.

35. I Say, Essay

Essays don't have to be hard. Since the beginning of time, students have learned to write five-paragraph essays in school. Well, maybe not since the beginning of time—but close! Learn to write a good factual essay your teacher will love.

36. You Oughta

Speak your mind respectfully. If you like something, it's okay to talk about it. It's never a crime to discuss with someone what you believe, with respect and gentleness. (That means not being obnoxious!) Learn to persuade others with your writing.

37. By Me

You've written a story; now get it published. Many writers ask, "How can I get my writing published?" Great question! If you like to write, you might someday like others to read your stuff. Learn inside tips for young writers to get their stories published—what to expect and what not to do.

38. Christians as Writers

How do you write Christianly? Did you know many of the greatest writers in history have been Christians? But what does that mean for you? Learn the three E's of Christian writing—evangelize, edify, and entertain.

39. Webwriting!

Take your writing to web 2.0. What's different about writing for the Web? Just about everything. Explore what it takes to make writing work for the Web and how to use your writing and outlining skills to create your own website.

40. Dear Diary

Write about your daily life. It's good to keep a journal. How often should you write? And on what topics? Learn to keep a personal journal and how it can teach you to become a better writer.

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