



Listen. Speak. Read. Write. Think!



# Reaching the Reluctant Writer

Presented by Andrew Pudewa

Director of the Institute of Excellence in Writing



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# A few problems...

## 1. Aptitude differences





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# A few problems...

1. Aptitude differences
2. Curricular options

Consequently what works for one student won't necessarily work for all.





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# 3. The Defining Challenge

“I don’t know what to write!”

“I don’t know what to say!”

“I can’t think of anything!”



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A successful approach is this:  
*Remove the problem!*

You don't have to think of WHAT to write  
in order to begin learning HOW to write!



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# Provide a source text

1. At or below the reading level of the student.



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2. Make a key word outline, taking a maximum of three words from each sentence.





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3. Verbally tell back the content from key words (test the outline).
4. Retell the content on paper, writing sentences from the key word outline.



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# This is not a “new” idea; Benjamin Franklin used it!

Excerpt from his Autobiography

...when my Father happened to find my papers . . . he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing, observed that although I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I owed to the printing house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement.



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# Franklin, cont.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished if possible to imitate it. With that view, I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words, that should come to hand.



# Franklin, cont.

Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words or a readiness in recollecting and using them, (which I thought I should have acquired before that time), since the continual occasion for words of the same import but of different length, to suit the measure or of different sound for the rhyme would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it.



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# Franklin, cont.

I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks, endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.



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# Let's try one!

## The Fox and the Goat

By an unlucky chance, a fox fell into a deep well from which there was no escape. A goat passed by and asked the fox, "What are you doing down there?" "Oh, have you not heard?" said the fox, "there is going to be a great drought, so I came down here in order to be sure to have water by me. Why don't you come down too?" The goat thought this a good idea and jumped down into the well. But the fox immediately sprang onto the goat's back, and by putting a foot on the goat's long horns, managed to hop up to the edge of the well. "Good-bye, friend," said the fox, "remember, be careful of the advice of one who is in trouble."



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2. \_\_\_\_\_
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# Next Steps

1. Talk through the KWO, speaking in complete sentences.

NOTE: This is a test of the outline, *not* the student!



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# Next Steps

1. Talk through the KWO, speaking in complete sentences.
2. Things to remember when asking students to write a draft are these:

Composition, spelling, and handwriting are *very different* brain functions!



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# Recommendations

1. No erasing allowed!



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1. No erasing allowed!
2. rough draft in *pen*, not pencil



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# Recommendations

1. No erasing allowed!
2. rough draft in *pen*, not pencil
3. Begin introducing a few dress-up style techniques:
  - -ly adverb
  - who/which clause
  - strong verb
  - quality adjective



# Sample -ly Adverbs

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7. \_\_\_\_\_

clumsily

carelessly

unhappily

unfortunately

curiously

innocently

cleverly

slyly

politely

foolishly

ignorantly

trustingly

instantly

deftly

rudely

obnoxiously

quietly

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# Review

1. Source texts should be at or below reading level.
2. Source texts should be interesting!
3. KWO: three words per sentence (max., symbols, numbers okay)
4. Tell back the content verbally to test the outline.
5. Separate complexity (no erasing, etc.).
6. Add dress-ups as they become EASY.
7. Avoid the Four Deadly Errors.  
(download from [IEW.com](http://IEW.com))



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# Outcome

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