

WRITING NONFICTION 1

SEVEN STEPS TO A FINISHED PIECE

Name _____ Date _____

PURPOSE

Learn seven essential steps to creating a great piece of nonfiction writing.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by your academic supervisor. All written work is turned in to your supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 6 hours.

BOOK:

Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers, Heron Books

A. INTRODUCTION

0. Work out with your supervisor who should do any writing coaching needed for the course; i.e., a particular student, any student who's done the course, or supervisor coaching for selected or all writing assignments. _____
1. DEFINE: (in a good dictionary) nonfiction. _____
2. READ: *Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers*, "Introduction." _____

B. SEVEN STEPS

1. READ: *Writing Nonfiction*, Part 1 The Seven Steps, Chapter 1 Step One: Know Your Purpose. _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Think of ten different pieces of nonfiction writing that you may need or want to create over the next several months. For each, write down a) what the topic might be, and b) what

the purpose might be. Try to think of examples that would represent a variety of purposes.

3. READ: Chapter 2 Step Two: Define Your Audience.

4. ESSAY: Discuss in writing, with examples, how defining your audience will help you ensure your communication actually arrives.

5. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Write three versions of a paragraph about how you spent yesterday:

a) audience: yourself (such as a journal or diary entry) _____

b) audience: your mother or father (such as an email) _____

c) audience: fellow students (such as a school newspaper article) _____

6. READ: Chapter 3 Step Three: Organize Your Thoughts.

7. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Imagine three different nonfiction writing assignments you might have in the near future. For each, create an imaginary outline, using things learned from Chapter 3.

8. DEMONSTRATION: Look at the *Contents* pages of this book (pages IV & V). Notice how they act as an outline for the whole book. Repeat this with another nonfiction book.

9. DEMONSTRATION: Look over one of the chapters in this book that you've read so far, or the next one. Sketch out a rough outline that shows how it is organized.

10. READ: Chapter 4 Step Four: Write a Draft.

11. ESSAY: Describe your own experience with writing a first draft for a major piece of writing. Discuss what has proven to work best for you, what you have tended to struggle with, and any insight you gained from Chapter 4.

12. READ: Chapter 5 Step Five: Revise and Refine.

13. DEMONSTRATION: Show another student your understanding of this statement: "Only when you are satisfied the writing has met your standard should you consider the piece ready to be read."

14. READ: Chapter 6 Step Six: Use Feedback.

15. ESSAY: Give an example or two from your own life where you got valuable feedback from someone who helped you improve your performance in some area. Discuss the value of good feedback. _____

16. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Get a piece of writing from your supervisor. It can be an actual piece of student writing that could use coaching, or it can simply be something the supervisor uses for this step with students. Coach it per the “Tips for Coaches.” **Supervisor pass.** _____

17. READ: Chapter 7 Step Seven: Finish the Piece. _____

18. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Take any piece of nonfiction writing you’ve done in the past year that you would like to review newly to see how you could improve it. Apply the concept of “finishing” the piece to it. _____

C. FINAL APPLICATION

1. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: In coordination with your supervisor, choose a piece of nonfiction writing you need or want to create. Apply what you have learned on this course to create a piece you are proud of. **Supervisor pass.** _____

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student _____ Date _____

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic supervisor _____ Date _____

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner _____ Date _____

FOR FACULTY

NOTE

The student's writing piece done for the final application will be needed for the exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Exam and answers

Materials list



WRITING NONFICTION 2

The Parts

Name _____ Date _____

PURPOSE

Learn rules and tips on the use of words, sentences, paragraphs and sections.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by your academic supervisor. All written work is turned in to your supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 8 hours.

BOOK:

Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers, Heron Books

A. WORDS

0. Work out with your supervisor who should do any writing coaching needed for the course; i.e., a particular student, any student who's done the course, or supervisor coaching for selected or all writing assignments. _____
1. READ: *Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers*, Part 2 The Parts, Chapter 8 Words. _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Take something you've written in the last year, and, if needed, print it out. Look it over for the points covered in Chapter 8, and use pencil or pen to make any corrections based on the seven tips on using words well. _____
3. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Look over the seven tips on using words well. Write a short essay describing which one, two or three of the tips you feel will be most useful to you as a writer, explaining why. _____

B. SENTENCES

1. READ: Chapter 9 Sentences to heading “The Run-On Sentence.” _____

2. DRILL: Read each of the groups of words below and check the box for *complete sentence* or *sentence fragment*, depending on which it is. For each fragment, use the lines available to turn it into a complete sentence.

a) *As soon as we arrived at the stadium.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

b) *The brilliant blue sky.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

c) *Create a playlist for the dance, please.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

d) *Because it was snowing.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

e) *Why don't you try it again?*

sentence fragment complete sentence

f) *Depending on the requirements.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

g) *Playing my favorite song.*

sentence fragment complete sentence

3. DRILL: Find and underline the four sentence fragments in the following paragraph.

My sister and I won tickets to see our favorite band in concert. We planned to arrive two hours early. To avoid long lines. We entered the stadium in plenty of time, but had trouble finding our seats. So confusing to find a way down to the front row seats. Then we met some people who had seats near ours, and they showed us where to go. Once the band came out on stage. I completely enjoyed every minute of the performance. Fantastic music!

4. READ: Chapter 9, section “The Run-On Sentence.”

5. DRILL: Correct the run-on sentences below. If there is a sentence that is not a run-on, write *correct* on the line below it.

a) *We wanted to get to the concert venue early to have time to eat something before the band started to play, we wanted to be in our seats at least a half hour early.*

b) *She found tennis difficult to master, especially serving the ball and volleying at the net.*

c) *Luis has been riding horses all his life, as a teenager working on a South American ranch he rode six hours every day, later he continued to ride for enjoyment.*

d) *For the past five years, the varsity volleyball team has been in the state playoffs, they have always won games in the first round, and one time they advanced to the finals.*

6. DRILL: Find and underline the run-on sentences in the following paragraph.

I just had to buy a new car this past fall. First, I narrowed it down to the type of car I need, a sedan, even then there were many different cars to consider. I further limited my search by setting a budget. That left ten cars for me to evaluate. I enjoyed looking at each car, reading reviews on them, and taking test drives. Finally, I decided it was best to buy an electric car there were reasonably priced models and they were better for the environment. I ended up getting a Nissan Leaf.

7. READ: Chapter 9, section “Sentence Rhythm and Variety” to the end of the chapter.

8. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Using two or more classic literature books, find examples of the writer using rhythm and variety in sentences until you feel you have a good grasp of this concept.

9. DRILL: Rewrite each of the following sentences in a way that might give them more “punch” by placing more important words last.

a) *They ate a delicious lunch during their hike to the lake.*

b) *He saw a water snake while rowing across the lake.*

c) *They witnessed a breathtaking sunset as they hiked home for the day.*

d) *They enjoyed a peaceful evening after a long day at the lake.*

C. PARAGRAPHS

1. READ: Chapter 10 Paragraphs. _____
2. DRILL: Read the text below and put a paragraph symbol (¶) where you think each new paragraph should start.

Annie had wanted to play varsity volleyball since she was eight years old. Now she was fourteen and in high school, so she was going to try out for the team. She arrived early for the tryouts and did all the warm-up exercises. First she had to serve the ball, and she hit it out of bounds every time. When she was playing at the net, she was not strong enough to jump and spike the ball. Nothing went well. Finally, the coach told her that she did not qualify for the team. She was still determined to make the team next year. All summer she practiced serving and spiking the volleyball every day. Most days she ran three miles and lifted weights to improve her stamina and strength. It was September and time to try out for the volleyball team again. Annie was ready. This time, she served the ball with accuracy. She was able to hit the ball well from any position on the court. She even had one chance to spike the ball and did it with power. At the end of the tryouts, the coach asked Annie to stay. She was afraid the coach was going to say that she had not made the team again. Instead, the coach said she had made remarkable improvements and would likely be a varsity starter! She had achieved her goal and now had new goals to set as a varsity volleyball team member.

3. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Look through a dozen books of different types and different reading levels. Observe paragraph length, paragraph integrity and paragraph continuity in each book. Do a short write-up on what you observed. _____

D. SECTIONS

1. READ: Chapter 11 Sections. _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Get, or print out, three nonfiction magazine articles. Read them and then do the following steps with each:
 - a) Mark what you see as the intro (or lead), body (or story) and conclusion (or close). _____
 - b) Notice if the intro (or lead) uses one of the ways discussed in Chapter 11. _____

c) Notice if the conclusion (or close) wraps things up smoothly, presents a solution or course of action, or otherwise ends the article in a satisfying way. ____

d) Check how well each did the following, in your opinion:

	draws you in	orients you	takes you on a journey	wraps things up smoothly
Article 1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Article 2:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Article 3:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. FINAL APPLICATION

1. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Using what you have learned about words, sentences, paragraphs and sections, write a nonfiction piece of roughly 500-1,000 words. (If approved by your supervisor, it can be something required for another course or class.) **Supervisor pass.**

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student _____ Date _____

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic supervisor _____ Date _____

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner _____ Date _____

FOR FACULTY

NOTE

The student's writing piece done for the final application will be needed for the exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Exam and answers

Materials list



WRITING NONFICTION 3

THE TYPES

Name _____ Date _____

PURPOSE

Learn about these common types of nonfiction writing:
persuasive, personal, business, and academic.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by your academic supervisor. All written work is turned in to your supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 20 hours.

BOOK:

Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers, Heron Books

A. PERSUASIVE

0. Work out with your supervisor who should do any writing coaching needed for the course; i.e., a particular student, any student who's done the course, or supervisor coaching for selected or all writing assignments. _____
1. READ: *Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers*, Part 3 The Types, Chapter 12 Persuasive to heading "Developing Your Argument." _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Choose three subjects that you already know something about. For each, write a statement that would not work as a thesis and a statement that would work as a thesis. Then explain why the ones that wouldn't work are unworkable as thesis statements and why the ones that would work are workable as thesis statements. _____
3. READ: Chapter 12, section "Developing Your Argument" to the end of the chapter. _____

4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Pick one thesis from those you wrote in step 2. Do any research needed to develop an outline for a persuasive essay that makes the point of your thesis. Then write it. Apply the seven steps learned in Part 1 and the lessons and tips learned in Part 2. **Supervisor pass.**

5. (If required by your supervisor) PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Repeat the above practical application with a new thesis. **Supervisor pass.**

B. PERSONAL

1. READ: Chapter 13 Personal.

2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Choose a use for writing a nonfiction piece about yourself, such as one of the common ones mentioned in Chapter 13. Make it something you can do in 200-300 words or so. Apply what you have learned in this and earlier chapters.

C. BUSINESS

1. READ: Chapter 14 Business.

2. DEMONSTRATION: Show what elements a proposal should consist of.

3. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Choose to write a proposal, résumé or expository business letter, whether for a real or imaginary purpose. Use what you have learned in Chapter 14 and earlier chapters in writing the piece.

4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: As a simple exercise in writing concisely, write your own version of this statement from Chapter 14: “The busier or more important the recipient, the harder you should work to achieve brevity.” **Supervisor pass.**

D. ACADEMIC

1. READ: Chapter 15 Academic to heading “Narrative Essays and Assignments.”

2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Look over examples of academic writing you have done over the last year or so. Even though you may not have known about the types of academic writing you just read about, most of your writing assignments were probably persuasive, expository or descriptive—or some combination. Find in your past writing assignments at least three examples of each of the types. The purpose of this step is to get a better understanding of these three types of academic writing by connecting them to your own nonfiction writing. If you can't find enough past writing samples, recall or review courses you've done and writing that was required until you can remember at least three examples of each.
 - a) persuasive ___ ___ ___
 - b) expository ___ ___ ___
 - c) descriptive ___ ___ ___

3. READ: Chapter 15, section "Narrative Essays and Assignments." _____

4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Plan and write a narrative essay of 500 words or more. Be sure to consider the elements of storytelling discussed in Chapter 15. _____

5. READ: Chapter 15, section "Research Papers" to the end of the chapter. _____

6. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Think of an example of researching something "small to big." It can be imaginary for the most part, as you won't be doing the research. List the (mostly imaginary) steps of the process, including any discoveries, insights or answers achieved. It should show your understanding of inductive reasoning. _____

7. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Repeat the above for "big to small" reasoning, showing your understanding of deductive reasoning. _____

8. ESSAY: Choose a subject that interests you. Explain how you would apply points 1-7 to research that subject, giving examples of what you would do on each point. _____

9. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Find information about a current event on social media which sounds illogical. Challenge the illogic by checking out its validity through other sources. You may also use a fact checking site, such as factcheck.org. Repeat until you find at least

one false or misleading piece of information. Write up a summary of what you did and what you found. _____

10. CLAY DEMONSTRATION: “Academic writing is only worthwhile when it represents your learning and your communication.” _____

E. FINAL APPLICATION

1. PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

- a) Pose a question to be answered or a problem to be solved in some area of interest. _____
- b) Do the research needed to answer the question or solve the problem. Keep the purpose clear of achieving new observations, conclusions, discoveries or insights along the way. _____
- c) Write a research paper of roughly 1,000–2,000 words. _____
- d) Check off these “handful of things to watch for in doing research and writing about it”:
 - honesty _____
 - failing to actually *look* _____
 - challenging illogic _____
 - going earlier _____
 - keeping track of your path _____
 - remaining objective _____
 - opening the doors to knowledge _____
 - using a suitable reference style _____

Supervisor pass. _____

2. (If required by your supervisor) PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Repeat the last practical application using a new question or problem.

Supervisor pass. _____

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student _____ Date _____

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic supervisor _____ Date _____

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner _____ Date _____

FOR FACULTY

NOTE

The student's research paper done for the final application will be needed for the exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Exam and answers

Materials list



WRITING NONFICTION 4

TOOLS, TIPS, CLARITY AND STYLE

Name _____ Date _____

PURPOSE

Make your nonfiction writing strong and effective.

HOW TO DO THIS COURSE: Do the steps in order. Initial and date each when done. Where there are two sign-off lines, get the step checked and initialed on the second line by another student or, if stated, by your academic supervisor. All written work is turned in to your supervisor.

ESTIMATED TIME: 6 hours.

BOOK:

Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers, Heron Books

A. TOOLS AND TIPS

0. Work out with your supervisor who should do any writing coaching needed for the course; i.e., a particular student, any student who's done the course, or supervisor coaching for selected or all writing assignments. _____
1. READ: *Writing Nonfiction: A Simple, Clear Approach for High Schoolers*, Part 4 Tools and Tips, Chapter 16 Tone. _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Create several versions of a short piece of nonfiction writing, each using a different tone. You may use something written before or write something newly. Keep this simple. _____
3. READ: Chapter 17 Consistency. _____
4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Write a three-paragraph essay on any topic. Have the first paragraph violate consistency of pronouns, the second violate consistency of verb tense, and the third violate consistency of tone. Then write an edited version of the essay that maintains pronoun, tense and tone consistency. _____

5. READ: Chapter 18 Active vs. Passive. _____
6. PRACTICAL APPLICATION:
 - a) Write ten sentences in active voice. ____
 - b) Write ten sentences in passive voice. ____
 - c) Turn half the sentences from (a) above into passive voice. ____
 - d) Turn half the sentences from (b) above into active voice. ____ _____
7. READ: Chapter 19 Concrete Language. _____
8. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Using a handful of classic literature books of your choice, observe the author's use of both concrete and abstract language until you have a good grasp of both. Write up what you found, with examples to illustrate your observations. **Supervisor pass.** _____
9. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Write a paragraph that uses a lot of abstract language. Then write a different version that uses some concrete language that helps create more vivid images for the reader. _____
10. READ: Chapter 20 Usage Tips. _____
11. ESSAY: Write a short essay describing the usage tips that you found most helpful and why. _____

B. CLARITY AND STYLE

1. READ: Part 5 Clarity and Style, Chapter 21 Four Enemies of Clarity. _____
2. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Write a four-paragraph essay. For the first paragraph, use a lot of generalization. In the second, overuse intensifiers. In the third, make some overstatements. In the fourth, conclude with a weak statement as your final point. Feel free to have fun with it, making the writing terrible in its use of these four enemies of clarity. _____
3. READ: Chapter 22 Developing a Style. _____
4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Write a nonfiction piece that discusses, in your own words, what "style" means. To illustrate your description, _____

talk about some aspect of your life where you feel you have your own style, including how you got or developed it. _____

C. FINAL APPLICATIONS

1. **ESSAY:** Write a short descriptive or expository essay about what writing style you would like to develop, or develop further, as a writer of nonfiction. You might think of it this way: How would you like readers to describe your writing? _____

2. **PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** Using the tools and tips you have learned, write a nonfiction piece of 500 words or more. It can be on any topic and any type, or combination of types, of nonfiction.
Supervisor pass. _____

I have completed the steps of this course. I understand what I studied and can use it.

Student _____ Date _____

The student has completed the steps of this course and knows and can apply what was studied.

Academic supervisor _____ Date _____

The student has passed the exam for this course.

Examiner _____ Date _____

FOR FACULTY

NOTE

The student's writing piece for the final application will be needed for the exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Exam and answers

Materials list

