

Why Does Writing Matter?

By Amelia Harper

Let us suppose that you are the smartest person in the world. You have discovered a cure for cancer, you know how to create peace in the Middle East, or you have found a solution for the problem of poverty. The only problem is that you do not know how to communicate well. Every time you try to write or speak, your words come out unclear or jumbled. You have trouble organizing your thoughts and getting them down in a form that can be easily transmitted to all those who need to know your creative and life-saving ideas. All your knowledge will be lost to the world forever. Thousands will die—chaos will reign—and all for the want of good communication skills.

Okay, so maybe this scenario is just a little extreme. But, in truth, you probably do have a good many great ideas. Most homeschoolers I know are chock full of them! The only obstacle that prevents you from sharing those ideas is your ability to communicate well, especially in a written form.

That is the main reason that people write: in order to communicate ideas to others. These ideas may be great ones (such as the ones above), or they may be simple. Of course, you could just speak your ideas. However, most spoken words are transitory and fade as soon as you say them. Spoken words are also generally limited to the audience of original hearers. Written words have the ability to last longer and can be transmitted to a larger audience in their original form. Those are two reasons that learning to write effectively is important.

Writing is better than speaking for another reason: It allows you to think through your ideas before communicating them to others. Have you ever said something and then wished you could take it back? Most of us have. The immediacy of the spoken word can sometimes cause problems. However, writing allows us to express our thoughts and then rearrange our words to correct our mistakes or to improve our expression. It even allows us to see our thoughts on paper (or on the screen) so that we can visually explore our ideas and their implications. That is why God invented my favorite buttons on the keyboard: the backspace and delete buttons. How many times have I wished for a verbal version!

Learning to write well not only allows you to communicate ideas, but it also prepares you for the world of employment. If you look over “help wanted” ads, you will see that there is one skill that is mentioned often in every area of employment: the ability to speak and write effectively. Employers desire these skills in employees, because good communication is essential if a business is to thrive. Many people shy away from positions that require them to write. Learning to be a good communicator will give you a winning edge when you become a job seeker.

Writing is also an expression of our personalities. Most people associate this with creative writing. However, even academic, journalistic, and report writing reveal something of you. Your personality is revealed in the material you choose to use and in the way you arrange that material. Your diction (word choices) and style also reveal a great deal about you—your background, your education, even the choice of books that you read and the movies that you watch.

Most people agree that learning to write is an important skill to master. However, sometimes homeschool moms avoid teaching writing because they don’t know how or because they

have never honed their own written communication skills. For the next few *Inspired Homeschooler* columns, we are planning to offer some practical lessons that homeschooling parents can share with their students. This month, we are offering a free lesson on how to write a paragraph. You can use this with students in the fourth grade or above as an introductory lesson or as a review for more advanced students. Simply [click on the link](#) and print out the lesson.

Amelia Harper is a homeschooling mother of five and a pastor's wife. She is also the author of Literary Lessons from the Lord of the Rings, a complete one-year literature curriculum designed for secondary-level homeschooled students. In addition, she is an English tutor and a freelance writer who contributes regularly to newspapers and magazines. For more information, go to www.homescholarbooks.com.

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