

# Language Arts Homeschool Checklist



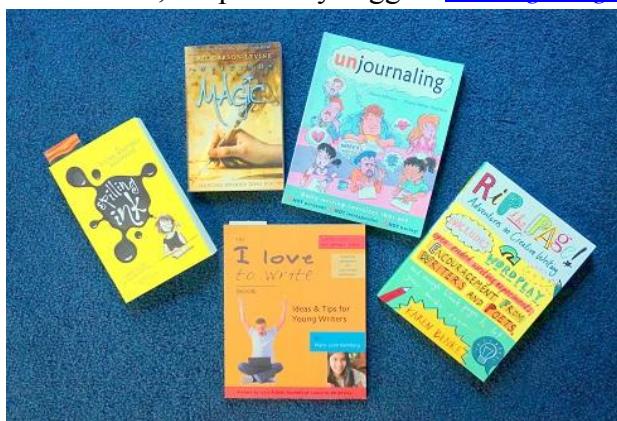
What skill do I want the kids to have in order to become successful writers? Here are some of the things on our checklist; skills I want the kids to build in elementary and middle school. These are topics and terms I want the kids to be familiar with. As they get older I hope they are able to use and incorporate these into their own writing.

How will we cover all this? In our family we use a writing workshop. We often have mini-lessons on a topic and point out examples from a piece of literature we've read that day. You can find out more about our Homeschool Writing Workshop on the blog.

Often before we begin our writing workshop (in lieu of a mini-lesson) the kids will read books about writing.

DD and LD have both read one of the *Write Source* student textbooks. It covered some of the fundamentals of writing. The kids read from this text for 20 minutes several times a week at the beginning of our Writing Workshop. I think it took them a couple of months to read the whole book. They had no issues with it, though they will not read through the next grade level because the style is similar and the kids felt it covered exactly the same thing (just with different wording). Here is a link to the 4th grade level: [Write Source: Student Edition Hardcover Grade 4.](#) (affiliate link) They also have both read [Writing Magic: Creating Stories that Fly](#) and [Spilling Ink: A Young Writer's Handbook](#) (affiliate link). These are books that encourage and give helpful pointers to young writers. (We set the timer for 10 minutes and read one of these writing resource books prior to writing.)

We have other books that help when they're feeling stuck. They've thumbed through [Rip the Page!: Adventures in Creative Writing](#) and [Unjournaling: Daily Writing Exercises That Are Not Personal, Not Introspective, Not Boring!](#) to come up with ideas. DD picks up [Unjournaling](#) about once a week for ideas. Again, if I had to recommend just one book, I'd probably suggest [Writing Magic](#) to start with.



This next year, we will probably use a traditional literature textbook that goes over many of the elements listed on the following pages. Again, we'll incorporate that into our Writing Workshop time; the kids will read the Lit book for 20-25 minutes or so on their own before we start the timer for writing.

This next year, we will probably use a traditional literature textbook that goes over many of the elements listed on the following pages. Again, we'll incorporate that into our Writing Workshop time; the kids will read the Lit book for 20-25 minutes or so on their own before we start the timer for writing. DD will be using [Literature by McDougal Littell -- Yellow Level](#) and LD will be using a different edition. They read the first section and

seemed just fine with it, but I'll let you know how it goes. Again, it covers some of the basics about literary analysis and some of the fundamentals of writing. We'll use this in the same way as the other books we've used up to this point... The kids will set the timer and read for about 20 minutes or so. I just want to add that I consider this part of their writing time, but that for "literature" itself, the kids will continue to read novels.

I'm sure this list will grow as I think about this more, but here's our first draft!

*Disclosure: Please note that some of the links above are affiliate links, and at no additional cost to you, I will earn a commission if you decide to make a purchase.*

# *Language Arts Homeschool Checklist*

- Write strong and varied sentences
- Creative writing
- Essay writing
- Research
  - note taking
  - outlines
  - writing papers
- Letter writing
  - informal
  - formal
- Using writing tools
  - power points
  - Word
  - Excel spreadsheets
  - blog writing
- Note taking skills (from lectures)
- Note taking skills (from books)
- Study Skills (being able to condense information and learn it using a method that works for them -- highlighting, index cards, etc.)
- Resumes (eventually, not when the kids are really young!)

## WRITING GENRES:

Be familiar with various writing genres. Practice a wide variety of genres in their writing, so they are comfortable and familiar with different styles of writing:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> short stories           | <input type="checkbox"/> fables            | <input type="checkbox"/> autobiography      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> novels                  | <input type="checkbox"/> folk tales        | <input type="checkbox"/> essays             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> novellas                | <input type="checkbox"/> poetry            | <input type="checkbox"/> speeches           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> historical fiction      | <input type="checkbox"/> haiku             | <input type="checkbox"/> news articles      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> science fiction/fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> limerick          | <input type="checkbox"/> reference articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mystery                 | <input type="checkbox"/> narrative poem    | <input type="checkbox"/> editorials         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crime                   | <input type="checkbox"/> drama             | <input type="checkbox"/> TV shows           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ghost stories/horror    | <input type="checkbox"/> comedies          | <input type="checkbox"/> advertising        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> myths                   | <input type="checkbox"/> historical dramas | <input type="checkbox"/> websites           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> legends                 | <input type="checkbox"/> radio plays       | <input type="checkbox"/> brochures          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tall tales              | <input type="checkbox"/> biography         |   |

## LITERARY ANALYSIS:

- plot
- conflict
- setting
- characters
  - character trait
  - words
  - actions
  - protagonist, antagonist
  - archetype
- Voice
  - active vs. passive voice
- Elements of style:
  - point of view
    - first person
    - second person
    - third person
  - dialogue
  - word choice
  - sentence structure
  - imagery
- Sound devices
  - rhyme
  - rhythm
  - repetition
  - alliteration
  - onomatopoeia
- figurative speech
  - metaphor
  - simile
  - personification
- identify and analyze symbols and symbolism
- topics vs. themes
- recurring themes
- universal themes
- Main idea - supporting details
- tone

- mood
- making inferences
- sequences
- foreshadowing
- argument - claim, support, counterargument
- persuasive techniques
  - bandwagon appeal ("everyone else" likes or does something)
  - testimonial (endorsements)
  - snob appeal - desire to be a part of a group
  - loyalty - people's affiliation to a group
  - emotional appeal - pity, fear, vanity
  - word choice

## GRAMMAR SKILLS

- capital letters
- commas
- semicolons
- quotation marks
- apostrophes
- italics/underlining
- homophones - their/they're/there, etc.
- plurals
- parts of speech:
  - subject, adjective, adverb, preposition, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, pronouns, clause, phrase, article, coordinating conjunctions, interjection, verbs - past, past participle, etc.
- diagramming a sentence
- editing