

# The Power in Your Hands:

## Writing Nonfiction in High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

### Teacher's Guide

Sharon Watson



[WritingWithSharonWatson.com](http://WritingWithSharonWatson.com)

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*The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Teacher's Guide*

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About This Course and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
Features of *The Power in Your Hands:  
Writing Nonfiction in High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* that you will love:

- Student-directed lessons
- Little to no prep time for the teacher
- Conversational style written to the student
- Complex material made easy to understand
- Relaxed atmosphere to encourage reluctant writers
- Designed to prepare high school students for college writing
- Practical tools every writer needs for high school and professional writing
- Suitable for classroom, co-op, or homeschool setting
- Composition basics in the beginning to allow less experienced writers to catch up
- 117 suggested daily lessons
- Complete instructions for 21 essays, reports, articles, and narratives in all nonfiction writing modes: persuasion, exposition, description, and narration
- Step-by-step instructions with exercises to reinforce the material
- The proofreading program Be Your Own Editor introduced incrementally and layered throughout the chapters
- Examples of professional writing in many chapters to show effective writing
- Examples of students' assignments to allow your students to evaluate writing
- Dual-level instruction for beginning writers and intermediate/accomplished ones:

**Beginning writer:** one who has not had much experience writing for school.

**Intermediate writer:** one who has written some essays for school but has not had much experience in the different modes of writing or their formats (persuasive, expository, descriptive, and narrative).

**Accomplished writer:** one who has written many kinds of essays and reports in high school and is preparing for college and/or professional writing.

- Digging Deeper lessons designed for intermediate/accomplished writers
- Copies of assignments and assignment checklists in the teacher's manual
- A how-to-grade section in the teacher's manual + **NEW GRADING GRIDS (RUBRICS) FOR EACH ESSAY ASSIGNMENT!**
- A year's worth of writing prompts (14-Minute Power Surges) in the Teacher's Guide
- A respect for the Bible as the inerrant Word of God
- Grammar lessons, but no grammar text included

## Contact Sharon Watson

For tutorials, weekly writing prompts, teaching tips, and more,  
visit Sharon Watson at

[WritingWithSharonWatson.com](http://WritingWithSharonWatson.com)

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Contents of Student Text *The Power in Your Hands:  
Writing Nonfiction in High School, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*  
(provided for reference)

Chapter 1: Thinking and Planning (2 daily lessons)  
Your Writing Self  
Tool: Brainstorming

Icons in textbook



Your Toolbox

Chapter 2: Opinion (5 daily lessons)  
Structure of an essay  
Homework format  
Tool: point orders  
Tool: Intro and conclusion, QSFSQ tools

Chapter 3: Persuasion—The Foundation (7 daily lessons)  
What is persuasion?  
Purpose statement  
Thesis statement  
Call to action  
Topic sentences  
Paragraph types  
Unity and completeness  
Digging Deeper: more fully developed introduction  
Digging Deeper: cohesiveness, 4 more paragraph types



Digging Deeper

Chapter 4: Persuasion—The Next Level (5 daily lessons)  
Don't List  
Do List  
Persuasive attitude



Grammar Factoid

Chapter 5: Persuasion—Logical Appeal (5 daily lessons)  
Key sentence: "I'll prove it!"  
Syllogism: premises and conclusion  
Logical appeal list  
Logical fallacies  
Grammar Factoid: in-text citation mechanics  
Be Your Own Editor #1 (proofreading)



Be Your Own Editor

Chapter 6: Persuasion—Compare-and-Contrast Appeal (5 daily lessons)  
Key sentence: "*That* is bad, but *this* is worse."  
Be Your Own Editor: nouns to verbs  
Digging Deeper: Thesis statement near the conclusion

Chapter 7: Persuasion—Moral/Ethical Appeal (4 daily lessons)

Key sentence: “Here’s the line; don’t cross it” or “You’ve crossed the line.”

Moral/ethical essay format

Moral/ethical letter format

Business letter format

Be Your Own Editor: active voice

Chapter 8: Persuasion—Emotional Appeal (8 daily lessons)

Key sentence: “Use an emotion to plant the notion.”

Review of former methods

Emotional Appeal Strategies

Chapter 9: Proofreading (5 daily lessons)

Proofreading marks

Full copy of Be Your Own Editor

Digging Deeper: Critiquing or peer review

Chapter 10: Proofreading—Common Grammar Mistakes (7 daily lessons)

Chapter 11: Exposition—Letters of Condolence, Thanks, and E-mail Etiquette (6 daily lessons)

Be Your Own Editor #2

Be Your Own Editor #3

Letters of condolence

Letters of thanks

E-mail etiquette

Chapter 12: Exposition—Process Writing (8 daily lessons)

What is exposition?

Fog Index

How-to

Tool: parallelism

Digging Deeper: four types of specialized process essays

Chapter 13: Exposition—Position Paper and Documenting Sources (7 daily lessons)

Taking notes

Paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism

Organizational methods

MLA method of documentation

Chapter 14: Exposition—A Devotional (2 daily lessons)

Grammar Factoid: Gender-neutral language

Devotional

Chapter 15: Exposition—Newspaper Writing (8 daily lessons)

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News formulas  
Attributions  
Leads  
Bias  
Hard news  
Feature writing

Chapter 16: Exposition—Biographies (5 daily lessons)

Biography angles/slants  
Transition statements  
Tool: patterns of three

Chapter 17: Exposition—Compare and Contrast (4 daily lessons)

Three methods of compare-and-contrast essays

Chapter 18: Exposition—Literary Analysis (10 daily lessons)

Setting  
Characters and characterization  
Conflict  
Plot  
Point of view  
Dialogue  
Voice  
Theme and symbols  
Digging Deeper: Motif  
Text and context  
You and your interpretation

Chapter 19: Exposition—The Definition Essay (3 daily lessons)

Chapter 20: Description (5 daily lessons)

An object  
A place  
A person

Chapter 21: Narration—Personal Testimony or Spiritual Journey (2 daily lessons)

Tool: no Christianese

Chapter 22: Narration—Interview into a Narrative (2 daily lessons)

How to conduct an interview

Chapter 23: Narration—Personal Narrative (2 daily lessons)

Reference—Your Toolbox

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## The Major Writing Assignments

### 1. Before You Write

- Brainstorm topics and points.

### 2. Opinion

- Write an opinion paper on teens owning credit cards. Word count: at least 300.  
Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 350 words.

### 3. Persuasion: The Foundation

- Write a persuasive paper on a topic of your choice. Exhibit unity and completeness. On the back of your paper, write the paragraph types you used. Word count: at least 300.  
Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 400.

### 4. Persuasion: The Next Level

- Write a persuasive paper on your pet peeves. Break as many guidelines as possible on the Don't List. Word count: at least 150.
- Write a persuasive essay on why children shouldn't watch horror movies. Word count: at least 300. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 400.

### 5. Persuasion: Logical

- Write a persuasive paper in the logical method on a hot topic or current event. Word count: at least 350. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 500 words.

### 6. Persuasion: Compare and Contrast

- Write a compare-and-contrast persuasive paper for a magazine or school newspaper. Word count: at least 350. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 500 words.

### 7. Persuasion: Moral/Ethical

Choose one of the following:

- In a moral/ethical persuasive essay, write about a social ill in society at large or in your area. Word count: 250-300.
- Write a letter to a business about a problem you see with their advertisements or the way they do business. Use the moral/ethical style of appeal. Word count: 250-300.
- Write a letter to a TV station or network about a particular show that crosses a moral line. Use the moral/ethical style of appeal. Word count: 250-300.
- Intermediate and accomplished writers: Write a more complete treatment of a topic, as though you are a magazine columnist. Check with your teacher for the word count.

### 8. Persuasion: Emotional Appeal

- Write a persuasive letter to your parents. Use the emotional appeal to convince them to let you go abroad to study for three months. On the back of your paper, write the three emotional-appeal strategies you used and the two emotions you appealed to. Word count: at least 300. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 400.



- Intermediate and accomplished writers: You may write the above assignment or this one—You have a dream or a vision for yourself or for others. Write about it as a speech using the emotional appeal. Word count: at least 500.
- Write a letter to the editor on a topic of your choice. Adhere to the magazine or newspaper's word count. Mail it in.

9. Proofreading

- Select an old assignment and proofread it using *Be Your Own Editor*.
- Digging Deeper: Critique a classmate's or friend's assignment.

10. Common Grammar Mistakes

- No essay this chapter. Each lesson contains sentences to correct.

11. Exposition: Letters of Condolence, Thanks, and E-mail Etiquette

- Write a letter of condolence to an imagined friend who has just lost a loved one.
- Write a thank-you letter to a relative for a strange gift.
- Write a reply to an e-mail. Match its formality.

12. Exposition: Process Writing

Beginning writers:

- Write a process essay. Word count: at least 400.

Intermediate and accomplished writers, choose **one** of the following:

- Write a problem-solving process essay on how to fix hunger in your town. Word count: at least 500.
- Write a "how it works" or "how it is done" process essay. Word count: at least 500.
- Write a causal-process essay. Word count: at least 500.
- Write a personal narrative (your story) of how you did something. Word count: at least 500.

13. Exposition: Position Paper

- Write a position paper on a relevant, debatable topic. Submit organizational method with paper. Word count: at least 1,000. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 1,500 words.
- Apply the MLA method of documentation to your position paper.

14. Exposition: Devotional

- Write a devotional. Word count: not over 200.

15. Exposition: Newspaper Writing

Choose **one** of the following assignments:

- Write a hard news article.
- Write a feature article.

Word count for beginning writers: between 350-500 words.

Word count for intermediate and accomplished writers: between 450-600 words.

16. Exposition: Biography

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- Write a biography after selecting a method. Word count: between 400-600. Intermediate and accomplished writers: 500-800.

17. Exposition: Compare and Contrast

- Write a compare-and-contrast paper. Use one of the three methods. Submit your list or chart. Word count: at least 350. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 500.

18. Exposition: Literary Analysis

Select one of the following assignments:

- Analyze “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson by answering this question: “In your opinion and based on what you read in the story, will the town ever abandon the lottery?” Word count: at least 400. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 600.
- Analyze a short story or novel that is considered a classic. Use this question: “What elements or features contribute to making this story a classic?” Word count: at least 400. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 600.

19. Exposition: The Definition Essay

- Choose one of the words and write a definition essay. Word count: at least 300. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 400.

20. Description: The Description Essay

- Write a paragraph describing an object. Word count: about 100.
- Write an essay describing a place twice—once with a positive dominant impression and once with a negative dominant impression. Word count: 100-250.
- Write an essay describing a person who has been influential in your life. Word count: at least 400. Word count for intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 600.

21. Narration: Testimony or Spiritual Journey

- Write your spiritual journey or some part of it. Word count: at least 350. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 500.

22. Narration: Interview into Narrative

- Conduct an interview. Then write it into narrative form. Word count: at least 400. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 600.

23. Narration: Personal Narrative

- Write a personal narrative and read it aloud to the class. Word count: at least 400. Intermediate and accomplished writers: at least 500.

## 14-Minute Power Surges Program - Guidelines -

- Power Surges are writing prompts designed to encourage students to write without feeling the pressure of being evaluated or graded every day.
- All modes of writing are included in the program: exposition, persuasion, description, and narration. Poetry, too.
- Power Surges are labeled by months and weeks, but most daily prompts are flexible and can be used anytime.
- These prompts are designed to encourage reluctant writers and delight eager ones.
- Give a new prompt to students every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Teens will write for 14 minutes, keep their own work, and not be graded on it—yet.
- On Friday students will choose which paper from the week they like best; then they will complete it, proofread it, and get it ready to hand in on the following Monday for a grade.
- The Power Surges program is not designed to be used concurrently with the textbook. Using individual prompts from time to time, however, may be helpful in greasing the writing wheels.
- Power Surges can be a fun break from the textbook or can be used as a yearlong program by itself.
- Students in classroom settings may want to volunteer to read their work aloud.
- Substitute a Grab Bag for a prompt occasionally. Put something intriguing in the bag so students can write about it (stinky gorgonzola cheese, an evocative picture, an unusual object, and so forth).
- Substitute your own writing prompts to fit your students' or classroom's needs.
- Plenty of other intriguing, hot-off-the-press high school prompts can be found at <http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/high-school-prompts/>. New ones are published weekly.

## 14-Minute Power Surges for September

### Week One

1. Compare your life to any job in the circus.
2. Write your plan to end war.
3. If someone gave you a free billboard, what would you put on it? Explain.
4. You've just met a person from another country, and neither of you can speak each other's language. How will you communicate?

### Week Two

1. Pull something from your purse, wallet, or backpack and use that item to explain something about yourself to an imaginary reader.
2. "Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense" (Gertrude Stein). What does she mean? Do you agree with her? Explain.
3. Invent a new feature for a tablet, cell phone, or other mobile device. Describe the feature and how it works.
4. Write an imaginary dialog between your parents before you were born, even if you are the child of a single parent.

### Week Three

1. Write a composition titled "This Is Me."
2. Write a list of product slogans you hear and read every day. Next, analyze what makes them work and what makes them stick in your head. Then develop a new logo and slogan for your favorite (or least favorite) product. This can be a brand of soda, shoe, cell phone, car, etc. Be sure to think about your target audience and build the new logo and slogan for them.
3. Scents have the power to bring back memories. What is the scent that does that for you, and what is the memory?
4. The end of the world has been prophesied in the Old and New Testaments, but it seems not only Christians think about the end of the world. Moviemakers tend to cash in on the idea of an apocalyptic end to the world with movies such as *Deep Impact*, *Planet of the Apes*, *2012*, and *The Day after Tomorrow*. What would people do if they knew that the world was going to end on a particular day? What would governments do? Sports teams? Schools? Hospitals? Churches? What would *you* do? Write a few paragraphs describing what you think would happen if everyone knew the world would end in on a certain day.

### Week Four

1. Describe your dream car.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ is like riding a roller coaster. Fill in the blank and explain.
3. Write about your proudest moment.
4. Rachel Fershleiser and Larry Smith compiled a book titled *Not Quite What I Was Planning* (Harper Perennial 2008), in which famous and not-so-famous people sum up their lives in six words. Here are a few examples:
  - Brought it to a boil, often. (Mario Batali, chef)
  - Me see world! Me write stories! (Elizabeth Gilbert, author)
  - Yes, you can edit this biography. (Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia)

Write your own six-word autobiography.



## Teacher Key to Chapter 1: Thinking & Planning

### *Lesson 1: Your Writing Self*

Do you identify with any of those statements?

If you do not, please jot in the margin a statement or two about what is true for you about writing. (*Answers will vary.*)

### *Lesson 2: The Planning Phase*

#### *Practice 1.1*

By now you may have thought of specific topics within the general topic of ecology. Write at least two ideas in the margin. If you get stuck, talk to others or consult a book on the subject for more ideas. Discuss your topics with your teacher. You will not be writing this report. This is just for practice—so have fun with it. *Answers will vary.*

#### *Practice 1.2: The Trick to Finding a Topic*

Choose a topic that is too broad or that is of no interest to you. Write it on a clean piece of paper or the back of an envelope, the inside of an old cereal box, whatever. Then brainstorm different facets of that topic in order to narrow it down or to find something of interest in it. Be spontaneous with your ideas and don't criticize them. Identify something worth writing about in that too-broad or too-boring topic. Discuss your results with your teacher. You will not be writing this for a report; just take your ideas out for a joyride. *Answers will vary.*

To use a colorful worksheet on the benefits of bike riding, go to

<http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/benefits-of-bike-riding-brainstorm-and-organize/>.

**Teacher**, an additional worksheet on the benefits of trees is available here:

<http://writingwithsharonwatson.com/benefits-of-trees-brainstorm-and-organize/>.

**Teacher**, there is no grading grid for this chapter. You may grade on participation or give no grade.

**Teacher**, for the purposes of this sample, I've included the grading grid from chapter 3. You'll find it on the next page.

## Grading Grid for Chapter 3's Persuasive Essay

STUDENT  
 NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Is each point strong, expressed well, and devised to convince readers to change their thinking or behavior? 1-15 points	<input type="radio"/>
Is the QSFSQ intriguing? (Quote, Statement, Fact, Story, or Question to hook readers) 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Does the introduction clearly introduce the topic and view? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Thesis statement: Is it clear? Is it at the end of the intro? Do the topic sentences and the rest of the paper support it? 1-15 points	<input type="radio"/>
Topic sentences: Is each one clear? Does each paragraph support its topic sentence? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Paragraphs: Are they arranged in an effective order? Are there a variety of types? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Does each stay on its topic and cover the topic well (unity and completeness)? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Does the conclusion issue a specific and measurable call to action? 1-5 points	<input type="radio"/>
Does the conclusion adequately sum up the topic and view, giving food for thought? 1-5 points	<input type="radio"/>
Is there something noteworthy about the ideas or the writing (humor, insightfulness, and so on)? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
Extra credit: Are paragraphs cohesive by use of repetition, sentence structure, contrasts, synonyms, antonyms, and so on? 1-10 points	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Grade for Content</b>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

How's the spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and so on? 1-25 points	<input type="radio"/>
Are there separate paragraphs for the intro, each point, and conclusion?	<input type="radio"/>
Was the paper handed in on time? 1-25 points	<input type="radio"/>
Did the student follow the written instructions? 1-25 points	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Grade for Grammar/Mechanics</b>	<input type="radio"/>

