
2024/2025 SCHOOL YEAR

Aquinas Writing Advantage

LIVE Course Guide

*Your complete, clearly laid out,
easy-to-follow learn-to-write program online.*



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Aquinas Writing Advantage – About the Program

Your **complete, easy-to-follow, learn-to-write program** that's online—
with LIVE and recorded courses **taught by world-class professionals** to
help your students become the best writers possible.

Aquinas Writing Advantage (AWA) is an **award-winning writing program**, full middle through high school writing instruction program that's online – offering both LIVE, scheduled semester-based courses and recorded, self-paced courses that are available 24/7.

AWA is a part of Homeschool Connections, a Catholic online curriculum provider for students in grades three through high school, where courses are offered in all subject areas — including English and writing, mathematics, sciences, humanities, history, government, economics, languages, literature, theology, philosophy, logic, computers, the arts, and more. Anyone can take recorded courses in the Aquinas Writing Advantage program – and all middle and high school students are welcome in LIVE courses; we respect all students' beliefs and welcome you!

What makes **AWA different** from other writing programs?



The Mastery Learning Approach

Courses are designed for your student to learn one skill of writing at a time – and then master the writing skill with immediate practice. You can learn no-error punctuation and grammar, essay and paper writing, higher vocabulary, fiction writing, journalism, poetry, literature and writing, and college prep writing – all with step-by-step knowledge and practice, to master writing skills easily.



Single-Topic Courses

You won't find “general grade-level” English and Writing courses here. Courses are divided into single, specific topics — so your student can focus on (and master) specific writing skills, one at a time, that build upon each other. Courses have an “order” and cover foundations before moving ahead to master specific advanced writing skills.



Clear, Easy, Stepwise Learning

Writing skills are taught in a straightforward, 1-2-3 order. Unlike other writing programs, your student learns simple yet profound professional writing how-to practices (even at the middle school level). The easy, stepwise approach assures that your student can choose powerful words, group words into powerful phrases, and write with clear transitions and cohesive ideas for longer pieces of writing. Most importantly, we want writing to be easy and enjoyable for every student. All that's here can set your student up for success.



Taught by Skilled Instructors and Professional Writers

All instructors are skilled teacher-leaders who are also highly skilled writing professionals – and many are professional editors, multi-book authors, learning specialists, and seasoned mentors with advanced degrees and years of experience guiding students to confidence and competency.

Why Trust Aquinas Writing Advantage...

Here, you'll find **clear expertise** that you can trust.

Your student learns **exactly what he or she needs to know** – for now, and for the future.

Aquinas Writing Advantage courses are...

 **Unique** — Not like any other program's content — because each foundational skill is separated and practiced before moving ahead, with pro writing tips and a practical writing perspective — allowing your student to focus on mastering one skill at a time.

 **Back-designed** — Designed by a college writing instructor and professional writer of over 35 years, course content has been created by “working backward” from the skills needed for confident, successful college-level writing — so your student gets exactly what's needed for future success.

 **Linear** — Content is taught “in a line,” with each course building upon the next — and the entire program is designed with complete continuity, so you don't have to worry “that everything is covered.” You get exactly what's needed for Writing, English, and more.

 **Simplified** — So there are no struggles, and your student learns easily – with pro writing tricks not seen anywhere else.

 **Expert** — With fast how-to tips and specific, detailed instruction that comes from both the higher-level curriculum (designed by university-level experts) and professional writing instructors' expertise.

Because the courses are unique, back-designed, linear, simplified, and expertly designed and taught, your student can understand how to write with the highest level of skill — to enjoy writing.

Designer/Senior Director

AWA is developed and led by Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA (aka author EB Conroy/Erin Brown Conroy) — a professional writer/editor and 18-book author. A former college writing professor at two universities, she has designed/developed writing curricula for multiple college/university writing programs; well-known online middle and high school programs; Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition programs; and professional writer trainings.

The Senior Writer/Writing Trainer and Supervisor for a worldwide company, she often presents to professional writers and judges teen and professional writing contests, and her *Simplified Writing* books are used in public and private schools and colleges across the world. Professor Brown holds a bachelor's degree in education, a master's degree in a special education field, and a terminal degree (MFA) in Creative Writing. At AWA, she oversees the Managing Director, Assistant High School and Middle School Directors, and 20 teaching staff.



Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA
AWA Senior Director



Middle School Writing Foundations

Foundations courses cover your middle school student's must-have skills to master writing – covering exactly what you need for your middle school student to gain expertise in correct punctuation and grammar, understand and use all parts of speech in sentences and paragraphs, and learn the foundations of essay writing.

In this section, you'll find an Overview page followed by specific course pages for your 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students. For easy identification, LIVE Fall courses are marked with a blue bar at the top of the page, and Spring courses are marked with a gold bar. Each course description links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Middle School Writing Foundations - An Overview

For 6th - 8th Grade Students

The 6/7 Series Courses

Designed for 6th and 7th-grade students, the 6/7 Series of courses lay the foundation for everything to come at AWA. Your student learns punctuation and grammar errors that are “common” (and how to avoid them) — and your student becomes skilled in using commas, end punctuation, quotation marks, and “tricky punctuation.” You’ll also learn the most common grammar errors to avoid — and master the use of the parts of speech that are critical to writing *anything* well.

Coming from another writing program?

Sign up for the [AWA Writing Evaluation for Middle School](#) for course placement or email info@homeschoolconnections@gmail.com.

Your student learns that writing simple sentences isn’t enough. Knowing how to choose and use deeper language — including strong nouns, active verbs, clarifying adjectives and adverbs, and detailed prepositional phrases — is critical to writing well-crafted sentences, paragraphs, and future essays. In the 6/7 Series, your student develops a strong understanding and ability to craft clear text.

MS 6/7-1 WRITING ESSENTIALS 1: Punctuation and Grammar I

MS 6/7-2 WRITING ESSENTIALS 2: Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing I

MS 6/7-3 WRITING ESSENTIALS 3: Punctuation & Grammar II

MS 6/7-4 WRITING ESSENTIALS 4: Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing II

The 7/8 Series Courses

Designed for 7th and 8th-grade students, the 7/8 Series of courses build on the foundations laid in the 6/7 Series. Your student learns that composition depends on the ability to purposefully craft diction (word choice) and syntax (word arrangement) — and your student continues to practice choosing precise and powerful words while arranging the words in strong paragraphs with purpose.

Your student also learns the elements of essay writing and form that are key to all future academics — and finds out that there are many kinds of writing, each with its own purpose, audience, and style (way to write). Because learning to write isn’t just about academic writing, students learn to see differences — and purposefully choose the writing techniques and styles needed for each type of writing.

Perhaps most importantly, students learn there are “secrets” to crafting paragraphs and essays — ways to make writing easier and more enjoyable — so your student comes away with a strong understanding and ability to craft longer portions of text confidently.

MS 7/8-1 SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MS 1: Foundations of Composition I

MS 7/8-2 SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MS 2: Introduction to Essays and Papers

MS 7/8-3 SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MS 3: Writing the Excellent Essay

MS 7/8-4 SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MS 4: Writing Form and Style

How the Middle School Writing courses fit together...

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
6 th (or 7 th)	<u>6/7-1</u>	<u>6/7-2</u>	<u>6/7-3</u>	<u>6/7-4</u>
7 th (or 8 th)	<u>7/8-1</u>	<u>7/8-2</u>	<u>7/8-3</u>	<u>7/8-4</u>

Middle School Writing Foundations (6/7 Series)

For 6th or 7th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...

6/7-1



Writing Essentials 1: Punctuation & Grammar I

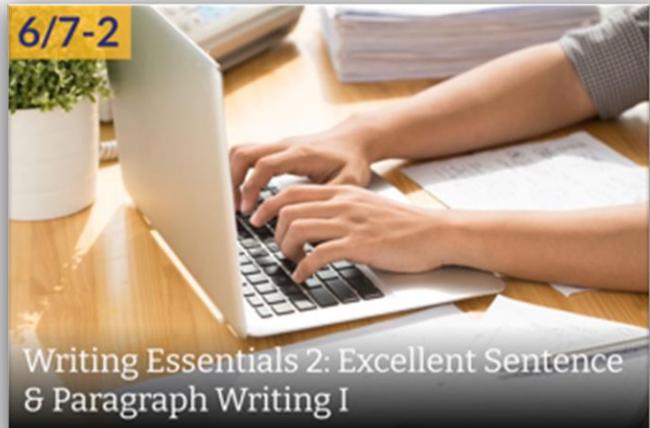
WRITING ESSENTIALS 1:

Punctuation and Grammar I (MS 6/7-1)

Help your middle school student gain confidence and master must-have skills for writing with this excellent foundational punctuation and grammar course — using specific “helps,” tips, and how-to’s to make your student’s critical writing skills strong.

This 6-week course is held in the first half of the Fall semester.

6/7-2



Writing Essentials 2: Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing I

WRITING ESSENTIALS 2:

Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing I (MS 6/7-2)

Help your middle school student learn how to skillfully use the specific and powerful parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and complete phrases), transitions, linear writing, and more in this must-have foundational writing course that goes beyond “normal” writing courses with practical writing using critical thinking (no workbooks). **This 6-week course is held in the second half of the Fall semester.**

LIVE Course Times Offered

Punctuation and Grammar I (MS 6/7-1)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 10:00 AM](#) OR [1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing I (MS 6/7-2)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 10:00 AM](#) OR [1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 6/7-1 & 6/7-2 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

No Prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to three (3) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies



[Bonnie Donlon, BA](#)



[Natalie Schira, BA](#)

Middle School Writing Foundations (6/7 Series)

For 6th or 7th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...



WRITING ESSENTIALS 3:

Punctuation and Grammar II (MS 6/7-3)

Give your middle school student the mastery needed for punctuation — creating strong sentences and getting rid of the most common writing mistakes. This critical course helps your student write clearly, free of punctuation and grammar errors. **This 6-week course is held in the first half of the Spring semester.**

WRITING ESSENTIALS 3:

Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing II (MS 6/7-4)

Help your student craft excellent sentences and paragraphs in writing practice through learning and using critical middle school must-haves for writing well — and gain understanding with practice in this hands-on writing course that goes beyond “normal” writing courses with practical writing using critical thinking (no workbooks). **This 6-week course is held in the second half of the Spring semester.**

LIVE Course Times Offered

Punctuation and Grammar II (MS 6/7-3)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 10:00 AM](#) OR [1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Excellent Sentence & Paragraph Writing II (MS 6/7-4)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 10:00 AM](#) OR [1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 6/7-3 & 6/7-4 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

Prerequisites are 6/7-1 & 6/7-2 via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to three (3) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies



[Bonnie Donlon, BA](#)



[Natalie Schira, BA](#)

Middle School Writing Foundations (7/8 Series)

For 7th or 8th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...

7/8-1

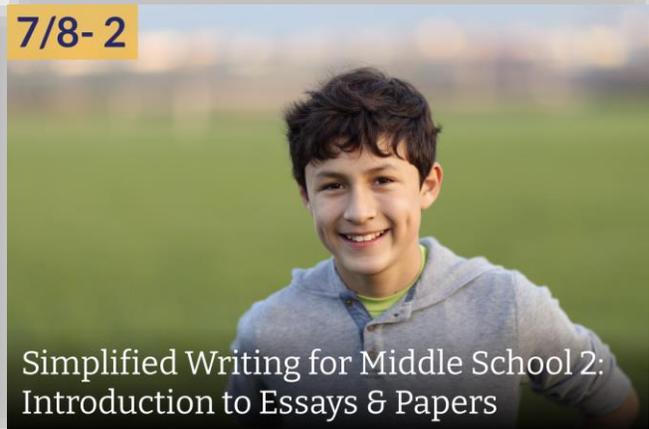


Simplified Writing for Middle School 1:
Foundations of Composition

SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL 1: **Foundations of Composition** (MS 7/8-1)

Help your middle school student gain writing confidence and become a skilled writer with an introduction to informative, expressive, and persuasive writing, including choosing strong and clear words, crafting strong sentences and paragraphs, and understanding how to write the parts of an essay with personal help and feedback on your work. **This 8-week course is held in the first half of the Fall semester.**

7/8-2



Simplified Writing for Middle School 2:
Introduction to Essays & Papers

SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL 1: **Introduction to Essays and Papers** (MS 7/8-2)

Help your middle school student gain must-have essay writing skills with personal help and feedback on their work, while understanding how to write an excellent introduction with a hook and thesis statement; how to brainstorm, order, and outline; and how to draft, revise, and edit for excellence. Students also learn upper-level paragraph structure. This course prepares your student for high school and helps your student write longer works with confidence. **This 8-week course is held in the second half of the Fall semester.**

LIVE Course Times Offered

Foundations of Composition (MS 7/8-1)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 10:00 AM OR 4:00 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Introduction to Essays & Papers (MS 7/8-2)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 10:00 AM OR 4:00 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 11:30 AM ET OR](#)

[Wednesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 7/8-1 & 7/8-2 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

Prerequisite is 6-series courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course Materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or newer version is required.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Natalie Schira, BA](#)



[Reilly Starrett, BA](#)

Middle School Writing Foundations (7/8 Series)

For 7th or 8th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...

7/8-3



Simplified Writing for Middle School 3:
Writing the Excellent Essay

SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL 3:

Writing the Excellent Essay

(MS 7/8-3)

In this advanced-level essay writing course for middle school students, help your student master essay writing with advanced concepts leading the student into high school writing. Taking the concepts learned in the 7/8-1 and 7/8-2 courses, the successful student finishing this course has the tools and is ready for successful high school essay writing. **This 8-week course is held in the first half of the Spring semester.**

7/8-4



Simplified Writing for Middle School 4:
Writing Form and Style

SIMPLIFIED WRITING FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL 4:

Writing Form and Style

(MS 7/8-4)

Help your middle school student be fully prepared for high school writing by learning the forms of nonfiction, fiction, informational writing, journalism, descriptive writing, reviews, speeches, Biblical writing, & more. Your student will learn to write in all these forms and how to choose the exact, clear style needed for future writing success. **This 8-week course is held in the second half of the Spring semester.**

Writing the Excellent Essay (MS 7/8-3)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 10:00 AM OR 4:00 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Writing Form and Style (MS 7/8-4)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 10:00 AM OR 4:00 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 7/8-3 & 7/8-4 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

Prerequisites are 7/8-1 & 7/8-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course Materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or newer version is required.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Natalie Schira, BA](#)



[Reilly Starrett, BA](#)



Middle School: Critical Thinking & Vocabulary Courses

Critical Thinking and Vocabulary courses give your middle school student the must-have skills to master the most important tools of writing—including understanding words and their meaning, growing your student's "word bank," and increasing your student's ability to think, ideate, and craft ideas more fully and clearly.

In this section, you'll find LIVE Fall courses, marked with a blue bar at the top of the page, and Spring courses are marked with a gold bar. Each course description links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Fall Semester 2024



Course Details

Suggested Credit

One-half (1/2) of a semester's credit for Writing or Literature.

Please note—this class does not take the place of the 7/8 foundational essay writing course within the Middle School writing program. We encourage 7th graders to take the 7/8 course either concurrently or previous to this course.

Total Classes: 12

Prerequisites are 6/7-1 & 6/7-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to two (2) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



[Natalie Schira, BA](#)

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE & WRITING 1: How to Read, Interpret, & Write about Literature, Part One

Studying and writing about literature is a part of school success—and middle school is the time to start! In this course, learn how to read, interpret, and write about literature—gaining a strong foundation for literature and writing courses for high school, college, and beyond. Learn the beauty and importance of the world of literature – and build the skills to write with understanding about the basic literary genres. Analyze and write about the elements of plot, setting, characterization, point of view, metaphor, irony, and symbolism – examining why authors write their stories (and make their writing choices). Most importantly, learn how to write an analysis using key literary works such as *The Gift of the Magi* and chapters from C.S. Lewis, Robert Louis Stevenson, and more! Here, you'll write each week and gain the tools necessary for literary analysis in future academic courses. **This Fall course is Part One of a two-part series; take both courses (Fall and Spring) for a full year's credit of literature and writing!**

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

[Thursdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on the day and time, above.

Spring Semester 2025



Course Details

Suggested Credit

One-half (1/2) of a semester's credit for Writing or Literature.

Please note– this class does not take the place of the 7/8 foundational essay writing course within the Middle School writing program. We encourage 7th graders to take the 7/8 course either concurrently or previous to this course.

Total Classes: 12

Prerequisite is *Introduction to Literature and Writing: How to Read, Interpret, and Write about Literature, Part One*.

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to two (2) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Natalie Shira, BA

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE & WRITING 2:

How to Read, Interpret, & Write about Literature, Part Two

Continue studying and writing about literature with this middle school course, and learn how to read, interpret, and write about literature -- guiding you to understanding the literary genres, increasing critical thinking through the knowledge of story elements in literature, and introducing authors' writing techniques. Learn alliteration, assonance, colored narrative, dialogue, narrative elements, tone, description, and more!

Analyze stories and famous poems, including works by Tolkien, while focusing on group discussions leading to stronger analysis and writing skills. Explore more literary elements – and learn how to write about the elements with confidence. You'll also get a chance to write every week – and after the course, you'll be prepared to move into any middle or high school literature course with confidence.

This Spring course is Part 2 of a two-part series; take both courses (Fall and Spring) for a full year's credit of literature and writing!

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Thursdays, 11:30 AM ET

For exact course dates, click on the day and time, above.

Middle School Critical Thinking & Vocabulary Courses

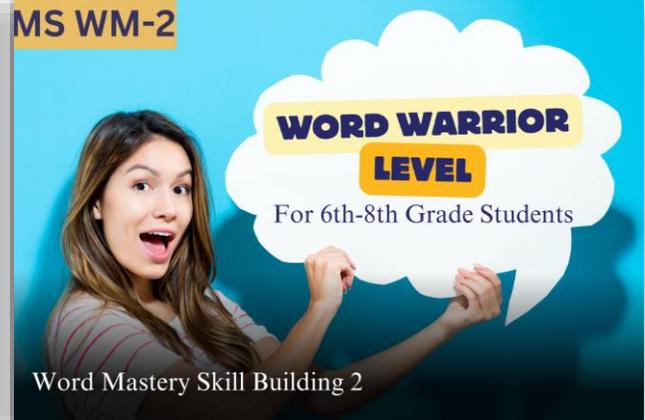
Word Mastery Skill Building For 6th - 8th Grade Students

Fall & Spring Semester 2024-2025

MS WM-1



MS WM-2



Course Details

Suggested Credit:

For a full year's credit for vocabulary, take *Word Mastery Skill Building 1* (Fall 2024) and *Word Mastery Skill Building 2* (Spring 2025).

Total Classes: 12/course

No prerequisites

Course Materials: [*Word Mastery Skill Building, Book 1*](#) and [*Word Mastery Skill Building, Book 2*](#), by Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately two and a half (2.5) hours/week.

Students will complete pages in the *Word Mastery Skill Building* book, which has homework divided over five (5) days. **This is a "flipped course," meaning students will complete the homework before class.**

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time to register for the course.

Word Mastery Skill Building 1: Apprentice Level
[Tuesdays, 10:00 AM](#) (Fall 2024)

Word Mastery Skill Building 2: Apprentice Level
[Tuesdays, 10:00 AM](#) (Spring 2025)

Critical Thinking & Vocabulary:

Word Mastery Skill Building 1 & 2: Apprentice & Word Warrior Levels (MS WM-1, MS WM 2)

Join these powerful 12-week courses that guide you through ultimate vocabulary and word mastery to gain smooth, upper-level reading, writing, and speaking! By taking a few moments each day, and then participating in the weekly class, you'll learn Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, homonyms, homophones, easily confused words (special word distinctions), sentence writing for comprehension, and more! It's the fastest, easiest way to raise your word mastery, writing, and communication skills!

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



[Aubrey Heki, BA](#)
AWA Managing Director



Middle School Spelling

Spelling mastery gives your middle school student the ability to write with confidence.

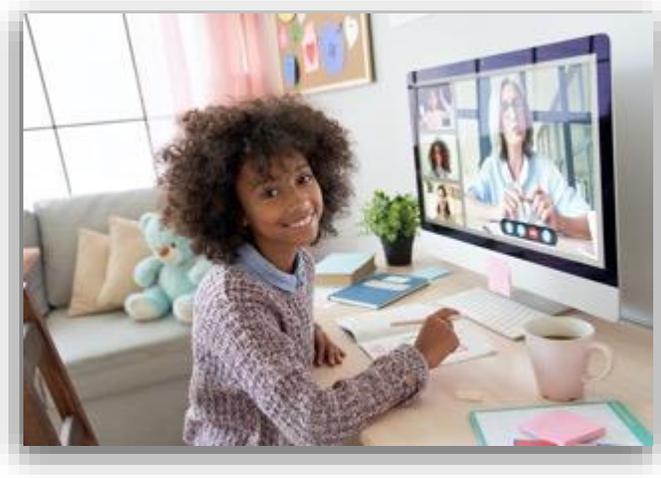
Many students struggle with spelling, which holds the student back from writing with certainty, self-reliance, boldness, and *enjoyment*. And often, spelling instruction today is steeped in outdated methods that actually hinder a mastery of spelling. But your student doesn't have to struggle.

In this section, you'll find information on the Spelling Bootcamp course – a recorded “short course” that can show your student a new, successful way to approach spelling that can give your student success. Turn the page now to find your course.

Middle School Spelling

For 6th - 8th Grade Students

If you want to make spelling effortless and fun (!), then this is for you! Get new ways to think about spelling to make it simple... discover games that make spelling downright fun ... and turn spelling into something you don't have to worry about because you have "insider information" to make it easier.



Course Details

Suggested Credit:

Supplemental, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ credit (may be extended with additional work)

Total Classes: 6

No prerequisites

Course Materials: All learning materials for the course are provided FREE by the instructor.

Students should be prepared with two (2) packs of 3x5 cards, a black marker, an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 notebook, and a highlighter.

Homework is approximately one hour of homework between classes.

Homework includes creating fun learning materials, playing spelling games, and practicing the ideas presented in the course.

Spelling:

Middle School Spelling Bootcamp

Is spelling a challenge? Do you want to find out what's going wrong -- and make spelling easier?

Join Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA, the Creator/Director of True North Reading: The Complete Mastery Reading & Spelling Program and the Aquinas Writing Advantage to get a new and powerful approach to spelling -- with the top how-to skills and easy tips (based on research and a powerful, successful approach) to make spelling easier.

Revolutionize the way you "do" spelling, understand what's missing, and find out how to remember the spelling of words much faster.

This course is available only as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA
AWA Senior Director



High School Writing Foundations

Foundations courses cover your high school student's "must-have skills" to master writing fully.

Here, your student learns how to get rid of common punctuation and grammar errors, craft powerful sentences with meaning, and gain competence in forming strong academic paragraphs, essays, and papers. Courses are progressive and sequential, with the 9 Series covering critical writing essentials, the 10 Series for growing vocabulary and practicing higher-level critical thinking and writing, the 11 Series for increasing the creative and critical thinking necessary for college and career (particularly for STEM courses), and the 12 Series pre-college courses that rival Advanced Placement (AP)-level writing mastery.

In this section, you'll find an Overview page followed by specific course pages. For easy identification, LIVE Fall courses are marked with a blue bar at the top of the page, and Spring courses are marked with a gold bar. Each course description links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

High School Writing Foundations - An Overview

For 9th – 12th Grade Students

Your 9th-12th grade writing courses cover what you need to be fully prepared for college and beyond.

The 9 Series Courses

The **9-Series** courses cover essential writing foundations — with rare tips to write faster, solidify upper-level punctuation and grammar, and get new ways to think about writing that make writing easier. Be sure to take these prerequisite courses, because what's taught here is different — not like any other program. Students learn special terms, tips, and ways to think about writing that are used throughout the entire AWA program (9-12th grades). *Click on the course photos for more information.*



The 10 Series Courses

With the **10 Series Vocabulary and Writing** courses (for 9th- 11th grade students), your student learns over **750** vocabulary words in one year — vocabulary that's important for succeeding in college-level writing, literature, and college entrance exams. Your student also gets weekly writing practice, memory training and studying tips, and enhanced critical thinking strategies. *Click on the course photos for more information.*



Coming from another writing program?
Sign up for the [Aquinas Writing Advantage Assessment](#) for course placement or email info@homeschoolconnections@gmail.com.

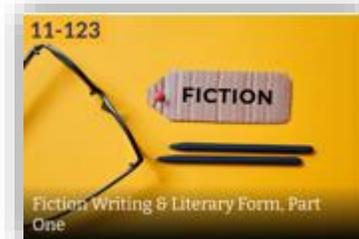
The 11 Series Courses

OPTION #1 – Fiction Writing Track

The **11 Series** Fiction Writing courses develop narrative and creative writing skills in a powerful, experiential way, so your student gains the skills that apply to academic, creative, and critical expressive forms. Under the fun, exploratory writing of “creating your own book,” students learn first-hand the elements that make literary form great — and become better writers through ways only narrative writing can powerfully influence skill and style.

OPTION #2 – Business Writing Track

The **Business Writing** courses are designed as both Writing Excellence courses (additional courses for additional skills) or as an alternate track to the 11-Series Creative Writing and Literary Form/Fiction Writing courses during the 11th-grade year. These courses give your student the edge for job preparation and professional writing skills. *Click on the course photos for more information. These courses are available only as recorded courses for the 2024-2025 school year.*



High School Writing Foundations - An Overview, cont'd

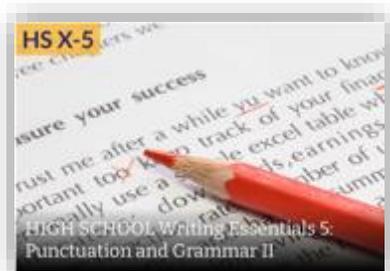
For 12th Grade Students/Advanced Pre-College

The 12 Series Courses

The **12 Series courses** (for college prep) give teens advanced skills to make writing strong, clear, and ready for college. Students write within the nine rhetorical modes, identify and use rhetorical strategies and figures of speech; and pre-write, draft, and edit a comparison and contrast paper, using advanced writing methods for a paper's hook, thesis, introduction, body, and conclusion. Students get specific, individual feedback from the instructor; learn vocabulary related to upper-level writing; and gain advanced editing and revising skills for upper-level work. These courses prepare college-bound students for success. **Click on the course photos for more information.**



Advanced Academic & Pre-College Writing Courses



High School Writing Essentials 5: Punctuation and Grammar II (X-5)

This course continues punctuation and grammar instruction and practice exercises — taking your student to college-level understanding. Students will move beyond common writing to mastering advanced sentence construction skills. If you want your teen to never struggle with punctuation and grammar and be able to be skillful in upper-level, college-prep punctuation and grammar, then this is the course for you. **Click on the course photo for more information. This course is available only as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.**



Pre-College Essentials: Essay Test Mastery for College-Bound Students (COLL-1)

This course is foundational for preparing students for college-level writing. If a student plans on attending any level of college, university, or specialized post-high school training (any major). Master in-class essay tests with this how-to course with practical, prescriptive, clear direction on how to decipher a prompt, think and process the instructions clearly, quickly brainstorm an answer, and write an essay in a linear narrative format with few errors — to “show the teacher what you know” with style. Take this course along with the 12 Series courses to be fully prepared and make college-level writing easier. **Click on the course photo for more information. This course is available only as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.**

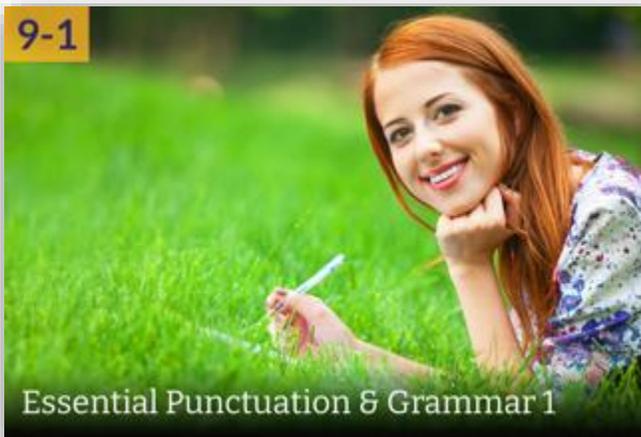
How the High School Writing courses fit together...

GRADE	FALL SEMESTER		SPRING SEMESTER	
9 TH	<u>9-1</u>	<u>9-2</u>	<u>9-3</u>	<u>9-4</u>
10 TH or (11 TH)	<u>10-1</u>		<u>10-2</u>	
11 TH	<u>11-123</u> (Fiction Writing) OR <u>11-9</u> (Business Writing)		<u>11-457</u> (Fiction Writing) OR <u>11-10</u> (Journalism)	
11 TH or (12 TH)	<u>12-1</u> & X-5 [Advanced]		<u>12-2</u> & <u>COLL-1</u> [Advanced]	

High School: Writing Foundations (9 Series)

For 9th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...



ESSENTIAL WRITING 1: Essential Punctuation & Grammar (HS 9-1)

Get rid of punctuation and grammar struggles and learn the must-have writing skills for mastering commas, tense, colons, semicolons, dashes, ellipses, and more – and overcome punctuation and grammar mistakes for good. **This 6-week course is held in the first half of the Fall semester.**

SIMPLIFIED WRITING 1: Strong Foundational Writing Skills (HS 9-2)

Make your writing strong & clear — and master the most critical foundations needed for excellent high school writing, including writing for an audience and purpose, perfecting word choice, strong sentences & paragraphs, linear writing, rhetoric, transitions, and more. **This 8-week course is held in the second half of the Fall**

LIVE Course Times Offered

Essential Punctuation & Grammar (HS 9-1)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)
[Tuesdays, 1:00 PM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)
[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM OR 1:00 PM ET](#)
[Thursdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Strong Foundational Writing Skills (HS 9-2)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)
[Tuesdays, 1:00 PM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)
[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM OR 1:00 PM ET](#)
[Thursdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 9-1 & 9-2 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

No Prerequisite

Course Materials

[Simplified Writing 101: Top Secrets for College Success](#), by Erin Brown Conroy is required. The course requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately two (2) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Sara Keefe, BA, MA](#)



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#)

High School: Writing Foundations (9 Series)

For 9th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025 ~ To gain **one full semester** of credit, sign up for both courses below...



ESSENTIAL WRITING 2: Excellent Paragraph & Essay Writing (HS 9-3)

Master the details of writing that you need to succeed — and perfect the essential tools necessary for excellent high school writing, including clear sentence and paragraph construction, summary and paraphrase, answering essay questions, linear & process writing, advanced paragraph structure, and more. **This 6-week course is held in the first half of the Spring**



SIMPLIFIED WRITING 2: Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay (HS 9-4)

Go beyond writing standard essays to mastering the secrets of advanced essay writing, including different essay types, advanced brainstorming techniques, using parallelism, cohesive writing, bookending, and more. These must-have essay skills apply to all high school and college courses.

This 8-week course is held in the second half of the Spring

LIVE Course Times Offered

Excellent Paragraph and Essay Writing (HS 9-3)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 1:00 PM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM OR 1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay (HS 9-4)

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 11:30 AM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 1:00 PM OR 2:30 PM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM OR 1:00 PM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 2:30 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 9-3 & 9-4 to gain one (1) full semester of writing credit.

Prerequisites are 9-1 & 9-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course Materials

[Simplified Writing 101: Top Secrets for College Success](#), by Erin Brown Conroy is required. The course requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately two (2) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Sara Keefe, BA, MA](#)



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#)

High School: Writing Foundations (10 Series)

For 10th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024

10-1



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 10-1 (Fall) & 10-2 (Spring) to gain one (1) full year of writing credit.

Total Classes: 14

Prerequisites are 9-1 & 9-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access; 9-3 & 9-4 courses are recommended.

Course Materials

EB Conroy's [Simplified Vocabulary Guide](#). The course requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week.

Vocabulary & Writing I (Part 1) (HS 10-1)

In this course (the first of two successive courses), your student will learn over 350 upper-level vocabulary words related to writing that are needed for high school advanced writing, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition courses, the ACT and SAT, advanced writing courses, and all of college writing—and an introduction to the concepts associated with the terms. Because vocabulary is the number one indicator of success on college entrance testing, if you want your student to not only score well on testing but also be able to be prepared for college writing and vocabulary, this course is for you. Coursework will be focused on the critical thinking and writing practice needed for your future success, and each week, you'll learn tips and how-to's for learning the words with comprehension and memory, giving you comprehension methods that can be used in any course.

Sign up for Part Two (Spring semester), for a complete year of writing credit.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA](#)



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#)



[Maureen Ryan, BA](#)

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 1:00 PM OR 5:30 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

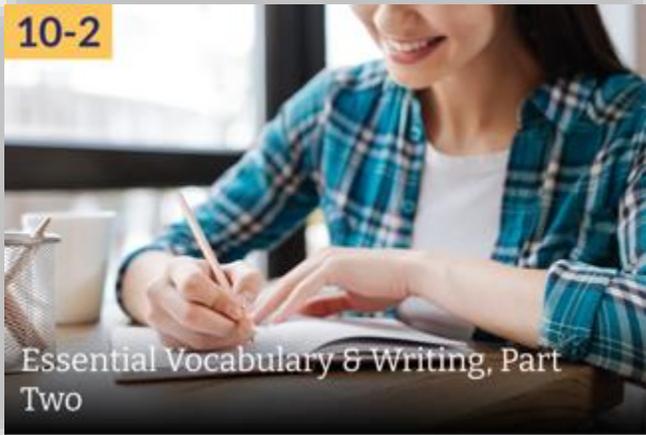
For exact course dates, click on a day and time above.

High School: Writing Foundations (10 Series)

For 10th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025

10-2



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 10-1 (Fall) & 10-2 (Spring) to gain one (1) full year of writing credit.

Total Classes: 14

Prerequisites are 9-1 & 9-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access; 9-3 & 9-4 courses are recommended.

Course Materials

EB Conroy's [*Simplified Vocabulary Guide*](#). The course requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week.

Vocabulary & Writing II (Part 2) (HS 10-2)

In this second (Part 2) of two successive courses, you'll continue learning advanced concepts associated with over 350 more upper-level vocabulary words necessary for success in all high school writing and literature courses, Advanced Placement (AP) English Language courses, and college-level writing. Coursework will be focused on the critical thinking and writing practice needed for your future success, and each week, you'll learn tips and how-to's for learning the words with comprehension and memory, as well as use the words in writing. Because vocabulary is an indicator of success in college *and* for the best communication practices in adult life, if you want to be prepared for college courses and beyond, this course is for you.

Be sure to sign up for Part One (Fall semester) along with this course, for a complete year of writing credit.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the links below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA](#)



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#)



[Maureen Ryan, BA](#)

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 1:00 PM OR 5:30 PM ET](#)

[Tuesdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

[Wednesdays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

Fall Semester 2024

11-123



Fiction Writing, Part One (HS 11-123)

“What makes great fiction? And how can I use fiction writing to make all of my writing dynamic, interesting, and strong?” In this course (the first of two successive courses), you’ll understand what makes excellent fiction writing and hone your writing skills as you write your own story using the elements and writing techniques of excellent storytelling.

Whether you want to write a novel or want to be a dynamic, successful writer in all that you do — learning great plot and structure, description and setting, and characters and dialogue skills will allow you to write exceptionally well, raise your written communication skills, become skilled in the elements of literary analysis, and be fully prepared for college and beyond. Learn skills, be creative, and enjoy writing! **Be sure to sign up for Part Two (Spring semester) along with this course, for a complete year of writing credit.**

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 11-123 (Fall) & 11-457 (Spring) to gain one (1) full year of writing credit.

Total Classes: 12

Prerequisites are 9-1 & 9-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



Cherise Papa, BA

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

Wednesdays, 10:00 AM ET

Thursdays, 1:00 PM ET

For exact course dates, click on a day and time above.

Spring Semester 2025

11-457



Fiction Writing, Part Two (HS 11-457)

“What makes great fiction? And how can I use fiction writing to make all of my writing dynamic, interesting, and strong?” In this course (the second of two successive courses), you’ll learn what makes excellent fiction writing — and hone your writing skills through the elements and writing techniques of writing an excellent story.

Whether you want to write a novel or want to be a dynamic, successful writer in all that you do — learning the elements of theme, writing style, point of view, creating conflict, and “what makes a short story great” allows you to write exceptionally well, raise your written communication skills, become skilled in the elements of literary analysis, and be fully prepared for college and beyond. **Be sure to sign up for Part One (Fall semester) along with this course, for a complete year of writing credit.**

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 11-123 & 11-457 to gain one (1) full year of writing credit.

Prerequisites are 9-1 & 9-2 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately three (3) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



[Cherise Papa, BA](#)

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Wednesdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 1:00 PM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time above.

High School Writing Foundations (12 Series)

For 11th and 12th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024

12-1



Advanced Rhetoric & Writing 1: Rhetoric, Figures of Speech, Essays, & Papers

ADVANCED RHETORIC AND WRITING 1: Rhetoric, Figures of Speech, Essays, & Papers

(HS 12-1)

Give your teen the advanced skills to make writing strong and clear. In this course, your student learns foundational college writing skills—including in-depth use of the nine basic forms of rhetoric (rhetorical modes); identifying and using major rhetorical strategies and figures of speech; and pre-writing, drafting, and editing a comparison and contrast paper. Students also use advanced writing methods for a paper's hook, thesis, introduction, body, conclusion, and key rewriting skills with specific, individual feedback from the instructor. Vocabulary related to upper-level writing is introduced and integrated into the learning. Specific class time will be used to show how to edit and revise upper-level work. This course's content is a prerequisite for many colleges for college-bound students.

Be sure to sign up for Part Two of the 12 Series (Spring semester) for a complete year of writing credit.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 12-1 (Fall) & 12-2 (Spring) to gain one (1) year of writing credit.

Total Classes: 10

Prerequisites are 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, & 9-4 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access

Course Materials *Simplified Writing 101: Top Secrets for College Success*, by Erin Brown Conroy; requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately four (4) to five (5) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the link below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#) [Maureen Ryan, BA](#)

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

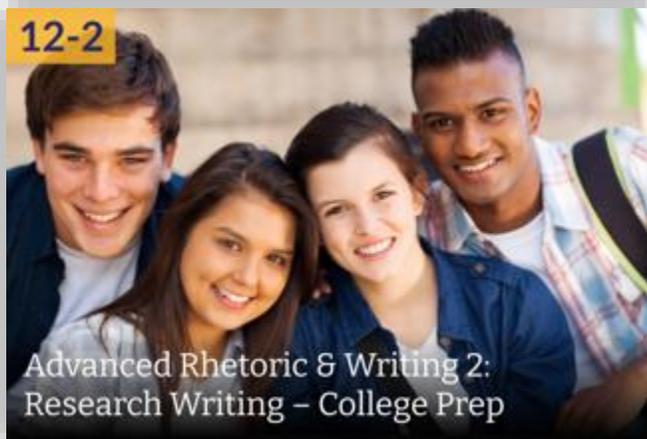
[Mondays, 10:00 AM ET](#)
[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)
[Fridays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.

High School Writing Foundations (12 Series)

For 11th and 12th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025



ADVANCED RHETORIC AND WRITING 2: Rhetoric, Figures of Speech, Essays, & Papers (HS 12-2)

Would you like to be completely prepared for college writing? When you take this college prep course, you'll learn advanced research and writing techniques for argumentative research writing, how to craft an advanced research paper, and understanding style guides (APA, CMS/Turabian, MLA, AP) — and become comfortable with the writing skills you'll use in college-level writing. A bibliography and research paper will be written during the course, and students will learn how to cite sources, use advanced methods of outlining, and master revising, editing, and final draft completion for upper-level academic papers.

Be sure to sign up for Part One of the 12 Series (Spring semester) along with this course, for a complete year of writing credit.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

Take 12-1 (Fall) & 12-2 (Spring) to gain one (1) year of writing credit.

Total Classes: 10

Prerequisites are 9-1, 9-2, 9-3, & 9-4 courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access

Course Materials *Simplified Writing 101: Top Secrets for College Success*, by Erin Brown Conroy; requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately four (4) to five (5) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructors

Click on the link below to view the instructors' biographies.



[Sharon Hamric-Weis, BS, JD](#) [Maureen Ryan, BA](#)

LIVE Course Times Offered

Click on a day and time below to register for the course.

[Mondays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

[Thursdays, 10:00 AM ET](#)

[Fridays, 11:30 AM ET](#)

For exact course dates, click on a day and time, above.



High School Fiction & Creative Writing

Did you know – AWA’s Fiction Writing program is the largest and most complete faith-based Creative and Fiction Writing program in the world?! Here, your student can increase both creative expression and the advanced critical thinking that is necessary to master all writing and more! With these courses, students dive into every element of literary analysis, learn how to expand ideas, and get excited about writing. Whether you want to increase your student’s enjoyment of writing, give your student a top-tier, transferable skill, or give your creative writer the tools to succeed, this is the place to be.

In this section, you’ll find an Overview page followed by specific course pages. For easy identification, LIVE Fall courses are marked with a blue bar at the top of the page, and Spring courses are marked with a gold bar. Each course description links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Fiction & Creative Writing – An Overview

NEW LIVE Courses for 8th-12th Grade Students

Creative Writing courses are designed for any 8th-12th grade student who wants to increase his or her writing skills while cultivating a love of creative composition. Students hone their skills by diving into various creative writing processes, styles, genres, mediums, and expressions.

The following writing courses can be taken alongside any Aquinas Writing Advantage course. While not a replacement for any foundational writing courses, these courses offer a fun and engaging way to learn creative writing.



How to Write a Children's Book (HS X-21) – NEW!

If you've ever wanted to know how to write a children's book, this course is for you! Learn how stories are put together – from picture books to early-readers to middle-grade novels – and learn how to write your own stories, too. *Please note that the 7/8 Series or 9 series courses are a prerequisite for this course.*

Click on the course photo for more information. Turn to page 31 for registration details.



Journaling to Become Better Writer (HS X-22) – NEW!

Tap into your creativity through journaling! Whether you want to be a better writer or want to develop original ideas, journaling skills can help you take the next step in critical thinking and creativity. In this course, we'll explore famous journal writers, methods of journaling, using journals to find inspiration for new ideas, and tips to build creative thinking skills that will help you flourish as a writer or innovator in any field.

Click on the course photo for more information. Turn to page 32 for registration details.



Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part One: Secrets of Videography and Writing to Help You Become a Great Visual Communicator (X-23) – NEW!

If you're interested in the exciting world of creating videos and storytelling that informs, inspires, and changes minds, then this videography and writing course is for you! Learn all that goes into production, writing, and expressing yourself in a powerful visual medium.

Click on the course photo for more information. Turn to page 33 for registration details.



Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part Two: Creating a Video Production Project (X-24) – NEW!

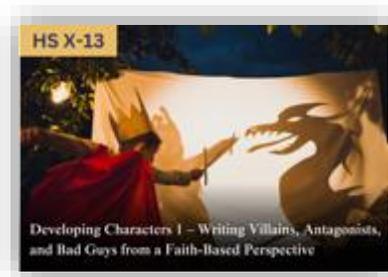
It's time to create a video story within a collaborative learning team! Dig into production, writing, and expressing yourself in a powerful visual medium with a semester-long project focusing on illustrating a Bible verse or passage. This course furthers your practical knowledge of excellent writing, storytelling, interpersonal communication skills, and core competencies.

Click on the course photos for more information. Turn to page 34 for registration details.

Your Developing Characters courses are designed for any 8th-12th grade student who wants to create compelling characters in any genre.

The following four 4-week writing courses combined offer 12 weeks of writing credit. These courses can be taken alongside any Aquinas Writing Advantage course. While not a replacement for any foundational writing courses, these courses offer a fun and engaging way to learn creative writing.

Developing Characters Series - NEW!



Developing Characters 1 – Writing Villains, Antagonists, and Bad Guys from a Faith-Based Perspective (X-13)

Learn the craft of story writing with villains, antagonists, and “bad guys.” Every great story has a “bad guy” – and using the elements of great storytelling, we’ll craft unique characters and learn how to create tension and stakes with opposing forces. We’ll discuss how to build a compelling character arc with conflict and reader engagement while understanding the great potential of using strong opposing characters to help our protagonists grow. We’ll also dive into the types of “bad guys,” what drives an antagonist, and how a well-formed villain can actually bring out the best in a story. [Click on the course photo for more information.](#) [Turn to page 35 for registration details.](#)



Developing Characters 2 – Writing Characters with Superpowers (HS X-14)

Learn the craft of writing characters with superpowers and magical abilities. Superheroes and characters with powers have been a popular speculative fiction category with fame that comes through movies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), DC movies, comic books, magical stories in Middle Earth, and more! What makes a great Superman, Ironman, Gandalf, Animorph, or Spiderman? Using the elements of great storytelling, we’ll craft unique characters and learn how to create superheroes that make us cheer. We’ll discuss what makes a superhero, how to build a compelling character arc, and how to craft a memorable superhero in our story. [Click on the course photo for more information.](#) [Turn to page 35 for registration details.](#)



Developing Characters 3 – Writing Kings, Queens, Courts, and Jesters (HS X-15)

Learn the craft of writing royal characters, including kings, queens, princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, and jesters! Characters of medieval royalty have been popular in fantasy fiction since their existence in our history – and there is a reason! In this course, we’ll explore the qualities of and fascination with characters of the courts. Using the elements of great storytelling, we’ll craft unique characters and learn how to create royalty that tugs at our hearts, stirs our anger, makes us laugh, and inspires us to live with honor and passion. [Click on the course photo for more information.](#) [Turn to page 36 for registration details.](#)



Developing Characters 4 – Friends, Buddies, and Teammates – Oh My! (HS X-16)

Learn the craft of writing characters who are friends, family, teammates, sidekicks, buddies, and confidants – all people we love. And let’s not forget the close companionship of the human-animal connection! Honorable friendships and tight alliances, both human and animal, make for excellent and powerful stories. Adding characters to our story who support our heroes with emotions and empathy creates a new level of commitment and loyalty. But perhaps most importantly, especially as people of faith, we are inspired by such characters. You’ll hone your creativity, improve your writing skills, and learn how to communicate the emotions of powerful human bonds in a compelling and transformative way. [Click on the course photo for more information.](#) [Turn to page 36 for registration details.](#)

Fiction & Creative Writing

NEW LIVE Course for 8th – 12th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024

HS X-21



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Sign up for this course and the companion course, *Story Writing: [Journaling to Become a Better Writer and Storyteller](#)* (HS X-22, offered in Spring 2025), for a combined 20 weeks of writing credit.

Total Classes: 12

Prerequisites are 7/8 Series OR 9 Series courses via LIVE or Unlimited Access.

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately two (2) to three (3) hours/week.

Creative Writing

How to Write a Children's Book – Picture Books, Readers, Chapter Books, and Middle-Grade Stories (HS X-21)

Have you ever wondered what goes into writing a children's book? Children's books are a form of story writing with specific elements and qualities, and there are many different levels of children's book writing. In this course, you'll learn types of children's books and all the elements that go into writing for children, including the rules, guidelines, and tips for creating memorable children's stories. Each week, along with learning the components of story writing, you'll hear first-hand from real, published authors on how they wrote and published their books. You'll also discover how to translate emotional elements into story; the inter-relationship of illustrations and words in children's books; and best practices for writing engaging children's literature. We'll also dig into writing nonfiction books, editing books for publication, and working collaboratively with editors. In this fun, engaging course, you'll deepen your understanding of writing for impact, develop descriptive writing and critical thinking skills, and get inspired to use your writing in powerful ways. **This 12-week course is offered in the Fall.**

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



Maureen Ryan, BA

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Mondays, 1:00 PM ET

For exact course dates and cost, click on the day and time, above.

This fun and engaging entry-level high school fiction course can be taken at the same time as any other writing course. Also, this course is not a replacement for any of the AWA foundational writing courses but instead is an "above-and-beyond" course.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the AWA foundational writing courses

Spring Semester 2025



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Sign up for this course and the companion course, *Story Writing: How to Write a Children's Book: Picture Books, Readers, Chapter Books, and Middle-Grade Stories* (HS X-21, offered in Fall 2024), for a combined 20 weeks of writing credit.

Total Classes: 8

No Prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Students will need writing implements and a book to use exclusively for journaling. They may choose any journal style, from spiral notebook to leather-bound or themed journal.

Homework is approximately two (2) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



Maureen Ryan, BA

Creative Writing

Journaling to Become a Better Writer and Storyteller
(HS X-22)

Have you ever wondered how great writers, filmmakers, and storytellers come up with new ideas? Have you struggled with taking an initial idea and turning it into a full idea or plan of action? For centuries, some of the most successful and exciting writers and thinkers across all disciplines have found journaling the best tool for thinking creatively and excelling in their field. In this course, we'll explore how to journal; investigate examples of journaling by authors, leaders, scientists, and creatives; discover strategies to keep you motivated and inspired to journal regularly (even daily); use journaling as a method to find inspiration and direction; and learn ways to turn journaling into a polished piece of writing. You'll engage with professional writers and their journaling experiences, too! This is an excellent course for any student who wants to develop writing skills, get inspired for greater creative thinking, and even become a professional writer. **This 8-week course is offered in the Spring.**

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Mondays, 1:00 PM ET

For exact course dates, click on the day and time, above.

This fun and engaging entry-level high school fiction course can be taken at the same time as any other writing course. Also, this course is not a replacement for any of the AWA foundational writing courses but instead is an "above-and-beyond" course. [Click here](#) to learn more about the AWA foundational writing courses

Fall Semester 2024



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Sign up for this course and the companion course, [Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part Two: Creating a Video Production Project](#) (HS X-24), offered in the Spring, for a combined 20 weeks of writing credit.

Total Classes: 10

No prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately two (2) to three (3) hours/week.

Creative Writing

Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part One: Secret of Videography and Writing to Help You Become a Great Visual Communicator (HS X-23)

Are you interested in what makes a great vlog, podcast, or even social post? Do you see yourself using writing creatively along with video production to change hearts and minds for good? Do you long to make a difference and inspire others through creativity? If so, then this course is for you!

Here, you'll learn how videography and writing work together to tell stories, motivate people to action, and inspire hearts. From interviews to creative storytelling, you'll learn what goes into creating videos; the processes and equipment in videography and writing; different purposes and styles of video communication; writing scripts for your purpose and audience; and how to integrate narrative storytelling into video projects that grab the viewer's attention. This course will allow you to raise your written communication skills, become skilled in the elements of visual communication, and gain exceptional, real-world skills for college and beyond. **This 10-week course is offered in the Fall.**

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



Doug Hughes, MA

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Tuesdays, 5:30 PM ET

For exact course dates and cost, click on the day and time, above.

This fun and engaging entry-level high school fiction course can be taken at the same time as any other writing course. Also, this course is not a replacement for any of the AWA foundational writing courses but instead is an "above-and-beyond" course. [Click here](#) to learn more about the AWA foundational writing courses

Spring Semester 2025



Course Details

Suggested Credit

Sign up for this course and the previous course, [Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part One: Secret of Videography and Writing to Help You Become a Great Visual Communicator](#) (HS X-23), offered in the Fall, for a combined 20 weeks of writing credit.

Total Classes: 10

No prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately two (2) to three (3) hours/week.

Creative Writing

Writing for Video Production, Media, and More, Part Two: Creating a Video Production Project (HS X-24)

Now that you've taken Part One of the series, it's time to dig in and create collaboratively with video production to change hearts and minds for good!

Here, you'll learn more about the foundational elements of writing for a video "story" (including the Three Act Structure, story arc, and more); "The Five-Shot Film" (what it is and how to use it); sound effects and music; your story's supporting elements (props, sound, lighting, and more); understanding and using camera angles, movements, and shots; how to collaborate in a creative team to make a cohesive video story; video editing; post-production; and how to engage in positive, constructive feedback in any environment. This course will allow you to raise your written communication skills, become skilled in the elements of visual communication, and gain exceptional, real-world skills for college and beyond.

This 10-week course is offered in the Fall.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the links below to view the instructor's biography.



Doug Hughes, MA

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Tuesdays, 5:30 PM ET

For exact course dates and cost, click on the day and time, above.

This fun and engaging entry-level high school fiction course can be taken at the same time as any other writing course. Also, this course is not a replacement for any of the AWA foundational writing courses but instead is an "above-and-beyond" course.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the AWA foundational writing courses

Fiction & Creative Writing

NEW LIVE Courses for 8th – 12th Grade Students

Fall Semester 2024 ~ Sign up for both courses below to gain additional credit.

HS X-13



Developing Characters 1 – Writing Villains, Antagonists, and Bad Guys from a Faith-Based Perspective

Developing Characters 1 Writing Villains, Antagonists, and Bad Guys from a Faith-Based Perspective (HS X-13)

Learn the craft of story writing with villains, antagonists, and “bad guys.” Using the elements of great storytelling, we’ll craft unique characters and learn how to create tension and stakes with opposing forces. **This 4-week course is held in the first half of the Fall semester.**

HS X-14



Developing Characters 2 – Writing Characters with Superpowers

Developing Characters 2 Writing Characters with Superpowers (HS X-14)

Learn the craft of writing characters with superpowers and magical abilities. Using the elements of great storytelling, we’ll craft unique characters and learn how to create superheroes that make us cheer. We’ll discuss what makes a superhero, how to build a compelling character arc, and how to craft a memorable superhero in our story. **This 4-week course is held in the second half of the Fall semester.**

Course Details

Suggested Credit

One-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of a semester’s credit for Writing or English. Taken together, HS X-13 & HS X-14 are two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) credit for Writing or English.

No Prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to three (3) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link to the right to view the instructor's biography.

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time to register for the course.

Writing Villains, Antagonists, and Bad Guys from a Faith-Based Perspective (HS X-13)
[Thursdays, 11:30 AM](#)

Writing Characters with Superpowers (HS X-14)
[Thursdays, 11:30 AM](#)



[Cherise Papa, BA](#)

Fiction & Creative Writing

NEW LIVE Courses for 8th – 12th Grade Students

Spring Semester 2025 ~ Sign up for both courses below to gain additional credit.



Developing Characters 3 Writing Kings, Queens, Courts, and Jesters

(HS X-15)

Learn how to write royal characters with this four-session course that raises your writing skills and creativity. You will come away with new knowledge of the elements of creating unique characters while using high-level writing skills in a way that's both fun and enjoyable.

This 4-week course is held in the first half of the Spring semester.



Developing Characters 4 Friends, Buddies, and Teammates – Oh My!

(HS X-16)

Learn how to write characters who have a close connection with this four-session course that raises your writing skills and creativity. You will come away with new knowledge of how to create unique characters united through friendship while using high-level writing skills – and having fun!

This 4-week course is held in the second half of the Spring semester.

Course Details

Suggested Credit

One-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of a semester's credit for Writing or English. Taken together, HS X-15 & HS X-16 are two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) credit for Writing or English.

No Prerequisite

Course materials are provided; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately one (1) to three (3) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link to the right to view the instructor's biography.

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time to register for the course.

Writing Kings, Queens, Courts and Jesters (HS X-15)
Thursdays, 11:30 AM

Friends, Buddies, and Teammates – Oh My! (HS X-16)
Thursdays, 11:30 AM



Cherise Papa, BA



Advanced Fiction Writing

Recorded Courses

AWA's Advanced Fiction Writing courses are some of the most complete, mastery-level creative writing courses for teens in the world. Here, your student can increase creative expression and the advanced critical thinking that is necessary for all advanced areas of study. Learning from published authors, professional editors, and award-winning videography storytellers, your student can explore a creative career or gain specialized skills that college application readers love to see. (Yes, students of these courses have gone on to become published authors!)

In this section, you'll find an Overview page followed by specific course pages. All advanced recorded courses can begin at any time. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Advanced Fiction Writing - An Overview

Recorded Courses for High School Students

Advanced fiction writing courses give your student “the edge” for college-level writing success. Future authors and poets can gain the professional-level knowledge needed to succeed in the published world. *A number of students who have taken the advanced courses are now published writers and authors.*



Advanced Fiction Writing: Authoring a Book, Part One & Part Two (HS 11-6 & HS 11-8)

Do you want to publish a book? Get your need-to-know essentials here, for how to be an author -- as you learn what professional authors do every day, what goes into a manuscript, how to write a query letter, what you need to know about agents and publishers, and more. Learn how to get your work noticed by perfecting your Query Letter and synopsis with this recorded workshop. You will also get what you need to be ready to submit your book to an agent or publisher now.

Click on the course photo for more information. This course is available as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.



Advanced Fiction Writing: The Hero's Journey & Mythic Structure for Writers, Part One & Part Two (HS X-9 & HS X-10)

Learn advanced story writing structure and the steps of putting a story together—and get to know all of the major character archetypes (such as the hero, the mentor, the gatekeeper, the herald, and more!). Find out what goes into any story for future college literature class must-haves—and get the know-how to author your own story. *Click on the course photos for more information. These courses are available as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.*



Advanced Fiction Writing: Screenwriting, Part One & Part Two (HS X-11 & HS X-12)

In this hands-on writing course, you will practice your advanced writing skills and learn how to design stories for film—including how to build characters, write dialogue, learn what makes a good movie, and craft scenes that make sense and engage the viewer. This course is for all writers who want advanced writing skills, especially for those who want to explore writing as a part—or full-time career. *Click on the course photos for more information. This course is available as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.*



Advanced Fiction Writing: Write Your Own Science Fiction/Fantasy Short Story (HS X-19)

Imagine, design, outline, and finish your own science fiction or fantasy short story in this how-to high-interest writing course -- and grow your writing skills with a dynamic, fun adventure to make writing engaging and exciting! *Click on the course photo for more information. This course is available as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.*



Critical Thinking & Vocabulary and Writing

Critical Thinking and Vocabulary courses give your high school student the must-have skills to master the most important tools of writing—including understanding words and their meaning, growing your student's "word bank," and increasing your student's ability to think, ideate, and craft ideas more fully and clearly.

All good writing hinges on your student's ability to think clearly and with ease, with powerful word choice. That's why the following courses help every single high school student excel. Each course description contains links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Critical Thinking & Vocabulary and Writing

Word Mastery Skill Building for 9th – 12th Grades

Fall & Spring Semester 2024-2025



Course Details

Suggested Credit:

For a full year's credit for vocabulary, take *Word Mastery Skill Building 5* (FALL 2024) and *Word Mastery Skill Building 6* (SPRING 2025).

Total Classes: 12/course

No prerequisites

Course Materials: [*Word Mastery Skill Building, Book 5*](#) and [*Word Mastery Skill Building, Book 6*](#), by Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA; access to Word 2007 or a newer version is required.

Homework is approximately two and a half (2.5) hours/week.

Students will complete pages in the *Word Mastery Skill Building* book, which has homework divided over five (5) days. **This is a "flipped course," meaning students will complete the homework before class.**

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time to register for the course.

Word Mastery Skill Building 5: Professional Level
Tuesdays, 11:30 AM (Fall 2024)

Word Mastery Skill Building 6: Ace Level
Tuesdays, 11:30 AM (Spring 2025)

Critical Thinking & Vocabulary: Word Mastery Skill Building 5 & 6: Professional & Ace Levels (HS WM-5, HS WM-6)

Join these powerful 12-week courses that guide you through ultimate vocabulary and word mastery to gain smooth, upper-level reading, writing, and speaking! By taking a few moments each day, and then participating in the weekly class, you'll learn Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, homonyms, homophones, easily confused words (special word distinctions), sentence writing for comprehension, and more! It's the fastest, easiest way to raise your word mastery, writing, and communication skills!

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Aubrey Heki, BA
AWA Managing Director



Study Skills, Leadership, & Interpersonal Communication

Good writing is intertwined with good study and communication skills – which is why the following courses are recommended for all high school students. Read through the following course descriptions, and see how the courses here will help your student to succeed in high school.

In this section, you'll find specific course pages. Courses are LIVE and recorded. LIVE Fall courses are marked with a blue bar at the top of the page, while Spring courses are marked with a gold bar. Each course description links directly to your sign-up page. Turn the page now to find your courses.

Study Skills: How to be an Excellent Student

LIVE Course for 9th - 12th Grades

Fall Semester 2024



Course Details

Suggested Credit: One-third (1/3) of one semester credit. Add the credits of this four-week course to any six- or eight-week course for a full semester's credit.

Total Classes: 4

Credit Suggestion: Combine with *Leadership & Interpersonal Communication*, offered in the Spring.

No Prerequisite

Course Materials are provided; requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately two (2) hours/week.

How to be an Excellent Student:

Note Taking, Test Taking, and How to Get an A

Get the skills to become strong, confident, and able to study for any high school level course with success! This course is a must-have for students who want to make learning and test taking the easiest (and most successful) that it can be. You'll learn the skills of active listening and active reading (what they are and how they work for you), note taking and annotation (for any "live" or online course or learning situation), critical reading skills for comprehension (to remember what you've read faster and with easier recall), test-taking skills (how to prepare for tests and what to do during tests), and more. You'll use these skills in high school, college, and beyond. Be prepared for the future and do well in your coursework today when you take this course! **Sign up for the Leadership & Interpersonal Communication course (SPRING semester) along with this course to continue learning communications, writing, and excellent student skills that can put your student ahead.**

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Bonnie Donlon, BA

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Fridays, 11:30 AM ET

This is a powerful, four-week "short course" offered in September. For exact course dates, click the day and time above.

Leadership & Interpersonal Communication

LIVE Course for 9th - 12th Grades

Spring Semester 2025



Course Details

Suggested Credit: One-half (1/2) of a semester's credit for Communications or Life Skills. Add the credits of this 6-week course to any six- or eight-week course for a full semester's credit.

Total Classes: 6

Credit Suggestion: Combine with *How to be an Excellent Student*, offered in the Fall.

No Prerequisite

Course Materials are provided; requires access to Word 2007 or newer version.

Homework is approximately two (2) to four (4) hours/week.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Aubrey Heki, BA

AWA Managing Director

Leadership & Interpersonal Communication

"What is leadership and interpersonal communication, and what does it have to do with my future?" This essential course guides you through the foundational and critical leadership and communication skills that all students need to succeed, including managing yourself well with emotional intelligence, conflict management, body language, speaking skills, and more to become a person of positive influence. Special attention is given to integrating our faith into leadership and personal communication, as well as practical action steps for building healthy relationships and living our faith to positively influence others in our community and world. This course draws from university-level leadership and interpersonal communications, to guide each student into good personal leadership practices and communication that is easy to understand, practical, and fun. Join this course if you want to be confident and able to connect with others in a positive way – and have the skills to build success for your future!

LIVE Course Time Offered

Click on the day and time below to register for the course.

Thursdays, 1:00 PM ET

This is a 6-week course offered in Jan. – Feb. For exact course dates, click on the day and time, above.



High School Spelling

Recorded Course

Spelling mastery gives your high school student the ability to write with confidence. Many students struggle with spelling, which holds them back from writing with certainty, self-reliance, boldness, and *enjoyment*. And often, spelling instruction today is steeped in outdated methods that actually hinder a mastery of spelling. But your student doesn't have to struggle.

In this section, you'll find information on the Spelling Bootcamp course – a recorded “short course” that can show your student a new, successful way to approach spelling that can give your student new-found success. Using sound principles of speech and language pathology, a research-based phonemic approach, new critical thinking, and gamification that is (proven to increase memory, your high school student will learn how to think differently about spelling – making spelling easier and more enjoyable. Turn the page now to find your course.

High School Spelling

Recorded Course for 9th – 12th Grades

If you finally want to make spelling easier and faster, then this course is for you.

Learn new ways to simplify spelling, make remembering spelling uncomplicated, discover games that make spelling downright fun, and learn a whole new way of thinking about spelling that turns it into something you don't have to worry about.



Course Details

Suggested Credit:

One-third (1/3) semester's credit for high school Language Arts; one-half (1/2) semester's credit if the parent does more with the student/the student repeats the "games."

Total Classes: 4

No prerequisites

Course Materials: All learning materials for the course are provided FREE by the instructor.

Students should be prepared with two (2) packs of 3x5 cards, a black marker, an 8 ½ x 11 notebook, and a highlighter.

Homework is approximately one hour of homework between classes.

Homework includes creating fun learning materials, playing spelling games, and practicing the ideas presented in the course.

Spelling:

High School Spelling Bootcamp

Do you wish writing and reading was faster for you? Do you ever struggle with remembering how to spell a word -- or is spelling simply a challenge?

If you want to find out what's going not only wrong but also just make spelling easier, join Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA, the Creator/Director of *True North Reading: The Complete Mastery Reading & Spelling Program* and the Aquinas Writing Advantage writing program, to get a new and powerful approach to spelling -- with the top how-to skills and easy tips (based on research and a powerful, successful approach) that will make spelling *much* easier.

Revolutionize the way you "do" spelling, understand what's missing, and find out how to remember the spelling of words much faster.

This course is available as a recorded course for the 2024-2025 school year.

Meet Your Instructor

Click on the link below to view the instructor's biography.



Erin M. Brown, MA, MFA
AWA Senior Director



We're so glad you're here!

If you have any questions about course registration, please reach out to info@homeschoolconnections.com or call Homeschool Connections' "Main Office" at 888-372-4757.

If you have any questions about the AWA courses, feel free to reach out to us at any time:

Erin M. Brown, Creator/Director: ebconroy@homeschoolconnections.com

Aubrey Heki, Managing Director: aheki@homeschoolconnections.com

To read more about these courses and the Aquinas Writing Advantage program, visit <https://awa.homeschoolconnections.com>.

We hope to see you in the writing courses soon!

May God Bless You in your Homeschooling Journey,

Erin & Aubrey