



my homeschool

# Literary Lines

Dictation & Writing Lessons

Year 8 Sample

By Michelle Morrow

Literary Lines

Dictation and Writing Lessons - Year 8

© Michelle Morrow 2019

Published by My Homeschool

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission.

The authors have made every reasonable effort to identify and contact the authors or owners of copyright materials included in this book and to attribute authorship. Where this has not occurred, authors or owners are invited to contact the publisher.

All enquiries to My Homeschool

# Contents

Introduction.....	4
Lesson 1 Student: Geometry .....	7
Lesson 1 Answers: Geometry.....	8

# Introduction

The goal of this book is to teach you how to apply the useful method of dictation based on the teachings of Ruth Beechick and Charlotte Mason. It also gives suggestions to help you extend this resource to cover other areas of language arts study.

Excerpts from whole or 'living' books have been used. They include: classic fiction, poetry, songs, biographies, studies of nature and plays. Passages have been carefully selected from a broad range of good literature. These extracts introduce your student 'mind to mind' with the author. They are educational, encouraging, uplifting and will bring delight to you and your students.

Many of the included works highlight what was happening in the era in which they were written. For this reason, some of the literature may well be 'politically incorrect' by today's standards, but at the time of writing it was not. Please use anything that is 'politically incorrect' as an opportunity to teach your student about the culture of the times.

## **The Purpose of Dictation**

Well-chosen passages expose children to good literature and a variety of writing styles that help them recognise and use well-structured sentences, good grammar and correct punctuation.

The dictation method that Charlotte Mason suggests is not what most of us would remember from school. A great emphasis is placed on **preparing the dictation** passage before they are required to write it. This can be done using copy work, word study and careful examination of the piece to be written (more on this later). The goal is to get it right the first time.

There are 16 dictation lessons. The lesson can be done over one or two days. The first part is the dictation. This is to be done with the parent. The second part is for independent study and it uses the literature selection to teach grammar, punctuation and other aspects of the Australian curriculum English curriculum. A separate *Dictation Passages Answer Guide: Year 8* is provided.

Presentation of the work is important. Instruct the student on using a margin, indentation of paragraphs and a title for the work. Encourage the student to use self-editing skills and proofread their work. **If they see something wrong allow them to correct it (using an eraser or liquid paper) prior to handing it over for marking.** Storage of the dictation can be in a notebook, folder or book. A well-presented work will make them proud of their achievements.

**Mark** their dictation on the spot whenever possible, getting them to erase the mistake and write the correction over it. This is a very important phase for imprinting

the correct image in your student's mind. Resist the temptation to scribble in the corrections. We want the students to be proud of their work. I use three indicators for marking: presentation, spelling and accuracy. I take a half point off for each mistake and give an overall mark.

### **Spelling and Word Study**

Knowing how to spell is essential in getting a dictation passage correct and dictation is a useful aid for teaching correct spelling.

When you and your students are preparing a dictation passage, have the student look for words that they may find difficult and have them do a **word study**. This can involve: carefully copying out the word; visualising the word in their mind with their eyes closed; practice writing the words (make sure they are practising the correct spelling).

After the word or words have been identified, allow time for the student to learn the spelling. When the student feels confident that they can spell the word correctly, begin the dictation. Look at your student's dictation and see where the errors are. From this you can make **individualised spelling lists**.

Remember to correct misspelt words as soon as possible so that you don't risk the student memorising the incorrect spelling.

### **Comprehension**

For this resource I have selected some difficult passages with complex punctuation. For a student to be able to comprehend a passage they need to have many skills cooperating to allow them to understand what they are reading. For many children this skill occurs naturally and we can 'test' it with simple oral questions or a written narration about the passage.

If you find that a student does not comprehend the passages you can look for various areas that will help you break down the process for them.

Can they read the passage? If they need some help then you might try reading it with them. If they cannot read it, trying to do dictation on the passage is not advisable.

Are they paying attention to the punctuation, pausing for commas or recognising a question mark?

Do they understand the vocabulary used?

What the reader knows (prior knowledge) of the passage being discussed also helps them comprehend a passage.

## **Vocabulary**

Reading words in the rich context of whole books is a very effective, natural method for increasing your student's vocabulary. When they find a word that they do not know, have them try to guess the meaning using the context of the extract and then either tell them the correct meaning or have them look it up in a dictionary. After they understand the meaning they can then put it into a sentence of their own either orally or written.

This is the ideal time to increase their dictionary and thesaurus skills, and teach about alphabetical order, root words, homonyms, antonyms and synonyms.

### **Preparing the Dictation Lessons**

1. Select the passage for dictation.
2. Begin each lesson with a reading of the passage. Check for comprehension.
3. Prepare the passage including word study and individual spelling, preparation, vocabulary words.
4. Do the dictation.
5. Mark the dictation.
6. Get student to independently finish the rest of the questions.

# Lesson 1 - Student: Geometry

From *Bright Star* by Gary Crew ©1996

So the Star Man came. He brought charts of the heavens and models of the planets and the telescope with which he had first sighted his comet, when it was no more than a glimmer in the western sky. And when he had done talking, he picked up a piece of chalk—just an ordinary chalk that Mr Hagley used and the boys stole to throw at one another—and he turned to the blackboard. He drew a circle, which was the sun, and a smaller circle, which was the earth, and then a great arc which swept about both. “What might this be?”, he asked.

Alicia’s hand shot up. “Geometry,” she answered.

1. Write the paragraph from dictation. Compare your completed work with the original. Correct mistakes.
2. Identify the capital letters and identify why they have been used this way. Write your response in a full sentence.
3. In this dictation passage there is a parenthetical phrase. What’s that? I’ll give you an example—although you may not need one—to help you identify it. There you go I just gave you an example! A parenthetical phrase is a break in thought from the main sentence that will help the reader (which is you at the moment) enhance the meaning of the root sentence. It is usually a digression from the topic or a further clarification. It doesn’t need to be a dash (actually they are called an em dash because they are a little longer than a hyphen about the length of an m) it could also be using parenthesis, or the easiest form would be to separate the phrase with two commas. Identify the four parenthetical phrases used in this lesson. The one used in *Bright Star* and the three used in my explanation.
4. Write a sentence with one parenthetical phrase (if you can).

**Note:** Writers tend to use the em dash to highlight or call attention to their parenthetical sentence. Do you think you noticed the parenthetical sentence in the dictation passage? I know I did—that’s why I chose it!

## Lesson 1 Answers: Geometry

2. Capitals are used to indicate the beginning of a sentence and the proper nouns. The “Star Man” is used as a proper noun here, as that is what people were calling him.

3. Parenthetical phrase:

- just an ordinary chalk that Mr Hagley used and the boys stole to throw at one another
- although you may not need one
- (which is you at the moment)
- (actually they are called an em dash because they are a little longer than a hyphen about the length of an m)