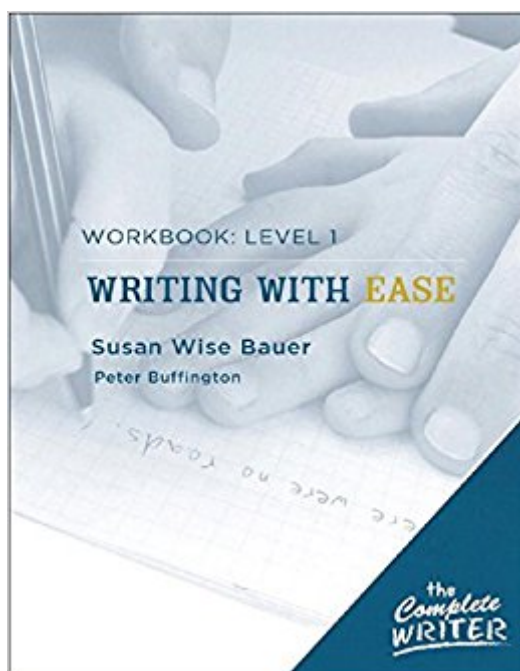


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# The Complete Writer: Level 1 Workbook For Writing With Ease (The Complete Writer)



## Synopsis

A workbook to accompany the acclaimed series on teaching writing, from the author of *The Well-Trained Mind*. In *Writing with Ease*, Susan Wise Bauer lays out an alternative plan for teaching writing, one that combines the best elements of old-fashioned writing instruction with innovative new educational methods. The Complete Writer workbooks (each sold separately) complement this plan with lessons, student worksheets, and teacher instructions for every day of writing instruction. Each covers one year of study. Used along with *Writing with Ease*, *The Complete Writer, Level One* (first in a four-volume set) complete the elementary-grade writing curriculum.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Susan Wise Bauer is a writer, teacher, and historian. Her books include *The Story of Science: From the Writings of Aristotle to the Big Bang Theory*, *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home*, *The Well-Educated Mind: A Guide to the Classical Education You Never Had*, the *History of the World* series (W. W. Norton) and the *Story of the World* series (Well-Trained Mind Press). She has a Ph.D. in American Studies from the College of William & Mary in Virginia, as well as an M.A. in seventeenth-century literature and a Master of Divinity in Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Literature. For fifteen years, she taught literature and composition at the College of William and Mary. She lives in Virginia.

I bought the workbook along with the complete writer text book even though I read reviews saying you don't need both. They were right! I appreciated seeing the high level big picture in the text (really just two pages at the very beginning of the book), but since I am using the workbook, I can't imagine I'll ever crack that one open again unless I want to refer to those two pages... You might prefer the text to the workbook though, so I'll try to walk you through picking which one is right for you, and at the end of the review I'll describe the WWE program itself. If you use this workbook: You will need to buy a new one each year (almost \$30 each time), BUT every single piece of copywork and every passage for narration and dictation is provided along with a paper on which to do the copywork, narration, or dictation... Everything is laid out and you just need to follow simple instructions. If you have multiple children, you can just copy these pages instead of pulling out the originals (perforated) and reuse. No lesson prep time needed, except to make the copy or pull out the page, and the literature Bauer uses is really great. We have used it as a guide for ideas for new readalouds (Little House in the big woods, Pinocchio, The Blue Fairy Book, etc.) If you use the text: You will have the plan for all four years, and it does walk you through how to progress week by week, BUT you have to come up with your own copywork and passages for narrations and dictations. This is the less expensive way to go by far (\$30 each year for four years, or \$15 one time) but it will cost you big time in terms of lesson prep time and effort. For me, I know that I may not always get the prep done in time and end up skipping the lessons :( AND since the copywork and passages are high quality, I see no need to reinvent the wheel. The program in general: Bauer's philosophy is that writing is really two tasks combines into one. There is the part where you come up with what to write, and the part where you write it down. For young kids, expecting them to do both is unrealistic, but allowing them to learn each one on its own sets them up for success. They start out alternating copywork (learning to physically write) and narrations (coming up with their own words, but you physically write it for them. Then they progress to doing some very short narrations, and then copying it down after you write it down. Later, there are dictations, where you speak to them and they write what you say. In this way, they learn the different aspects of coming up with things to write and writing them down, and then the skills slowly get put together until they can come up with ideas and write them down. Intellectually it makes perfect sense, and in practice, it really seems to be working. My boys (5 and 7) are enjoying the program and succeeding, rather than being intimidated and stressed by writing.

Not the easiest to follow for the grade level suggested. Good exercises, but it requires oversight and isn't good at all for independent work.

love this program!

I like Susan Wise Bauer's curricula in general, and I want to like this workbook. I love the copywork and narration, and it is helpful to have the scope and sequence laid out. BUT... it frustrates me.<sup>1</sup> The literature selections are from wonderful works, but lose 99% of their value when taken OUT OF CONTEXT. For example, *Little House in the Big Woods* is a great book. But when you read one random paragraph, and copy the sentence "There were no roads." from it....it loses the effect. It might as well be any random sentence made up by a workbook author. If you are using *Little House* as a read-aloud, it works well to do copywork from it. But my child isn't familiar with the book, so the literary benefit is lost when he reads and copies a miniscule excerpt. I would rather do this same concept but USE THE BOOKS THAT I READ ALOUD for source material.<sup>2</sup> The samples to copy are printed in the midst of white space. For first grade level, it would be helpful to have it written as a HANDWRITING SAMPLE, ON LINES. I am using *Handwriting Without Tears*, which uses a different type of lined paper, so I am having him write on that instead of in the workbook anyway. But most people use three-lined paper, and that's what is provided for the student to write on. It would make more sense to have the example written on lines as well, so it works better as handwriting practice. It's confusing to be told "copy this" when it actually looks different from what he is expected to produce; there is an unnecessary mental step of translation that he must do to translate "book font" to "handwriting on lines." Eliminating that step would allow him to focus on the content of what he's writing, which is the goal. If you want to have someone else choose your copywork and narration passages for you, this is done well. The source material is first rate. But I didn't realize how much I would dislike that since the passages have so much less merit out of their original context. The textbook could be useful to guide your scope and sequence; I think I'll keep it to give me an idea of how to increase the complexity of passages and keep me on track. But I'll pull my own source material from books we are reading. In case you're wondering, as I was, about the DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK, here you go: The TEXTBOOK gives broad scope and sequence for four years, generally grades 1-4. I'm on year one, so this is what it looks like. It basically spells out exactly what to do for one week (including passages), with copywork on days 1&3, narration on 2&4. It provides passages for week one, then for the next 3 weeks it says "follow the same weekly pattern as above", using books of your own choosing. Then it spells out week 5 for you (slight increase in complexity), and you figure out weeks 6-8 for yourself. Follow that pattern for each 4-week cycle. You would use your own handwriting paper or notebook paper. In comparison,

the WORKBOOK has passages selected for everyday. They are printed right there in the workbook. Then there is a perforated pull-out page with the copywork sample printed and blank lines for the student to write on. So basically the workbook allows you to follow the textbook, but not have to A) use your own paper, or B) choose your own passages, ever. And those are pretty much the two things I don't like about it.

I am using this to teach writing to my 6 year old. I like the approach she uses.

This has been a great writing program for my homeschooled 1st grader. It includes levels of copywork that is not overwhelming. The literature excerpts are great for narrations. I absolutely love everything Susan Wise Baur has written.

My son hates writing but he finds these lessons easy and sometimes fun to do!

We absolutely love this new curriculum! It really helps the kids to build narration skills (my younger one loves to chime in also) and gives them confidence in copying sentences. The story selections are fantastic! In a sense they are little 'teasers' that give the kids an appetite to read the whole book (although you really don't have to). I know another reviewer feel differently, but I think that this workbook is reasonably priced. We don't use the worksheets, but instead my son just writes his work in his notebook. This way the book becomes non-consumable. I did not purchase the hardback manual.

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