



Timberdoodle's
Curriculum Handbook

2015-2016
non-religious edition



Welcome to Fourth Grade



We're So Glad You're Here!

Congratulations on choosing to homeschool your child this year! Whether this is your first year as a teacher or your tenth, we're confident you'll find that there is very little that compares to watching your child's learning take off. In fact, teaching can be quite addictive, so be forewarned!

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Preparing for your first "school day" is very easy. Peruse this guide, look over the typical schedule, browse the introductions in your books, and you will be ready to go.



We're Here to Help You

We would love to assist you if questions come up, so please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns. Whether you contact us by phone, email, or live online chat, you will get a real person who is eager to serve you and your family. Have an absolutely amazing year with your child!



**THIS YEAR
YOU AND YOUR
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YOU ARE GOING
TO LOVE THIS!**

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Meet Your Handbook

TWO QUICK TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

Simple Is Better

We really believe that, so your guide is as simple as we could make it. First up are the annual planner and sample weekly checklists, the absolute backbones of Timberdoodle's curriculum kits. More on those in a moment. Next up are short bios of each item in your kit, ideal for refreshing your memory on why each is included or to show Dad exactly what your fourth-grader will be covering this year. We've also thrown in our tips or tricks to make this year more awesome for all of you. Finally, we'll conclude with favorite articles and tidbits amassed in our 30 years of homeschool experience.

Why Week by Week Works

We know you. OK, maybe not you personally, but we have yet to meet a homeschooler who didn't have other irons in the fire. From homesteading or running a business to swimming lessons or doctor's appointments,

your weeks are not dull. A daily schedule could overwhelm you both, but having a weekly checklist is the perfect blend of enough structure to finish in a timely fashion and enough freedom that your adventures won't make for stressful catch-up days. Relax; this is so doable!

	Art	Math	L.A.	Science
M	♥	✓	X	*
T	X	♥	✓	*
W	♥	✓	*	X
Th				
F				

Planning Your Year

HOW TO USE TIMBERDOODLE'S PLANNERS

If You Want to Finish It This Year

A standard school year is 36 weeks long, so that's what our samples here will show. But your family does not have to use that schedule! Perhaps you'd like to expedite this year so all school is done before baby arrives? Or perhaps your family prefers to school year-round and keep that brain sharp?

Use the Customizer

On page 11 you'll find a sample weekly checklist. Before you photocopy 36 of them, take a moment to check out the custom schedule builder that came free with your kit. At www.TimberdoodleSchedules.com, you'll not only easily adjust the weeks, but also tweak the checklist to include exactly what you want listed.

Designed for Maximum Flexibility

No two families are identical, so don't expect your pace or daily school time to be identical. Off to the dentist's this week? You won't fall behind by taking a day off. Or perhaps you'd like to save science for Saturdays so Dad can

be involved? Again, perfect! You even have a little slush room in most subjects, so don't hesitate to trim the lessons short on a long week.

Normal

We asked parents who used a Timberdoodle Fourth-Grade Curriculum Kit last year how long their student spent on "school." Over 95% of them estimated that their student spent 2-5 hours a day on their kit. That is a lot of variation and is likely to be impacted by how in-depth you take your child's studies, what your child's learning approach is, how distractable he is, and much more. Make sure you allow yourself and your child some time to find your own rhythm!

Meeting State Requirements

Check <https://www.hslda.org/laws> to see your specific requirements. For many states it is sufficient to simply hang on to your completed and dated weekly checklists along with a sampling of your child's best work this year.

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

Language Arts	Daily 6-Trait Writing	1 week's work					
	First Language Lessons	2-3 lessons					
	Spelling You See E	1 week's work					
	Marie's Words	2 games a week					
	Editor-in-Chief Beginning 2	1 exercise					

Checklist is
continued in
the Handbook.



Language Arts

Reading is probably the most important skill your child will practice this year. Whether he is a natural reader or one who doesn't truly enjoy reading, it is critical to make reading as fun and rewarding as possible now.

Our experience is that the best way to cultivate an eager reader is to constantly supply him with reading materials that interest him. Future doctors may want to read up on anatomy, young explorers are drawn to the escapades of adventurers young and old, and the baby-lover in your family will be captivated by adoption stories.

Assign reading if you must, but encourage it at all costs; a child who enjoys reading will find it easier to excel in every area.



FIRST LANGUAGE LESSONS 4



First Language Lessons requires very little teacher prep; just open the instruction manual, read the script, and follow directions to teach the concepts. The student workbook has appealing fonts and plenty of white space so the individual pages are less intimidating for children. Do not be alarmed by the size of these books!

First Language Lessons Level 4 covers a full range of grammar topics, including parts of speech, punctuation, sentence diagrams, and skills in beginning writing and storytelling. First Language Lessons' spiral learning method ensures mastery for every child, important for this foundational year of language study.

Scheduling

Do 2 - 3 lessons per week. If you choose to do the optional end lessons about contractions, writing letters, and dictionary skills, then plan on doing 3 lessons every week.

MARIE'S WORDS GAME

Because we remember faces more easily than we do names, it follows that learning vocabulary with colorful illustrations to help with recall is a more effective plan than merely studying lists of words and their definitions. Each Marie's Words card features a full-color, hand-drawn illustration on one side to show a word in a way that helps your child recall the meaning more easily.



Just as a logo is a visual representation of a company, Marie's Words utilizes colorful illustrations to create a "face" for each of the 550 vocabulary words gleaned from the SAT® test and literature. While some of the illustrations are not immediately apparent, once understood, each drawing will aid in mastering the definitions of these words and is a natural augmentation to your child's study of word roots. On the reverse of each Marie's Words card is the phonetic pronunciation, definition and part of speech, the word used in a sentence, synonyms, and antonyms.

Scheduling

If you want to cover each word this year, you'll want to introduce 16 new words every week. However, many families will prefer to simply get them out once or twice a week to play a game and proceed through them at a more leisurely and self-directed pace. After all, these are SAT® words, so there's no need to finish this year! See the next pages for game ideas to get you started, or check out their website for even more.

Four Games to Play with Marie's Words

OF ALL THE GAME IDEAS AT WWW.MARIESWORDS.COM, THESE ARE OUR FAVORITES FOR THIS AGE GROUP.

1. Marie's Word-of-the-Day

It's simple. Each morning you place a new card on the wall, refrigerator, or kitchen table (somewhere everyone is forced to look), and throughout the day everyone tries to learn the word and its meaning. Then, at the dinner table each night, everyone must use the word or one of its synonyms/antonyms correctly and contextually in a sentence. If this is achieved, that person earns one point/sticker/check on their checklist. The first one to get to 25 gets to choose a special treat for tomorrow. (BTW, if you did just two words per day, you would learn all 550 Picture Words in one year!)

2. Picture Wordy

Hold a card with the picture side (front) facing the player and read aloud the text side—pronunciation, part of speech, definition, and sentence—so that the Picture Word is understood. Then, ask the player to provide for you at least one example (preferably three) of the word or how the word might be used. For example, the word diminutive means “small, tiny, petite,” so you ask for three examples of anything that is diminutive. Common acceptable answers might be ants, dust (particles), fingernails, hair (strands), etc.

Moreover, the word embark means “to board a ship or aircraft for a journey,” so the player would give examples of transportation vessels, such as car, ship, speedboat, 747 airplane, spaceship, etc. This works great as a group game. Allow each group 20 seconds (or whatever is reasonable for your teams) to write down as many examples as they can. Each word that is on their list and not on their opposing team's list earns them a point. The first team to 25 points wins!

3. Picture Words

Place any number of cards face-up (picture side up) on the table. Taking turns, each player picks any face-up card on the table and attempts to provide its definition, meaning, or near synonyms without looking at the text side. Once he provides his answer, he reads aloud the text side of the card to the rest of the group. If the group determines that the player is correct, he keeps the card (worth one point). If incorrect, the player places the card back face down (text side up) on the table. When only text side cards remain on the table, flip them all over and keep playing until all the cards are gone. The player with the most cards at the end of the game is declared the winner. Variations of this game can be played where

bonus points are given for correct synonyms and antonyms, using the word contextually in a sentence, or correct pronunciation. This game may be played with any number of players and utilizes visual, verbal, logical, aural, and kinesthetic learning in the brain.

4. Diction Fishin'

Want to reinforce parts of speech and the roots and parts of words? This is the game for you! Each player draws seven cards from a stack of Picture Words.

On your turn, you ask another player for a specific part of speech, such as a noun, adjective, or verb. (You must already have at least one card of the requested part of speech.) If the player you ask has any number of Picture Words with the requested part of speech, then he or she must give you one of them of your choosing. If you ask for more than one card with the specific part of speech, then you only receive the requested cards if the player you are asking has exactly that number of cards with the specified part of speech. For example, if you ask for two verbs, then only if the person has two verb cards do you get to take them. If the person you ask has none of the requested cards with the specified part of speech, you must draw the top card from the stack. If that card is the part of speech you asked for, show the card to the other players and you get another turn. If you draw a card that is different than what you asked for, you keep the drawn

card and it now becomes the next player's turn. The next player is the one who didn't have the card you requested. When you collect four cards of the same part of speech, show the set to the other players and place the four cards text side up in front of yourself. The game continues until one player has no more cards in his or her hand or the draw pile runs out. If the draw pile is exhausted, then the player with the most four-card sets is declared the Fisher of Words!

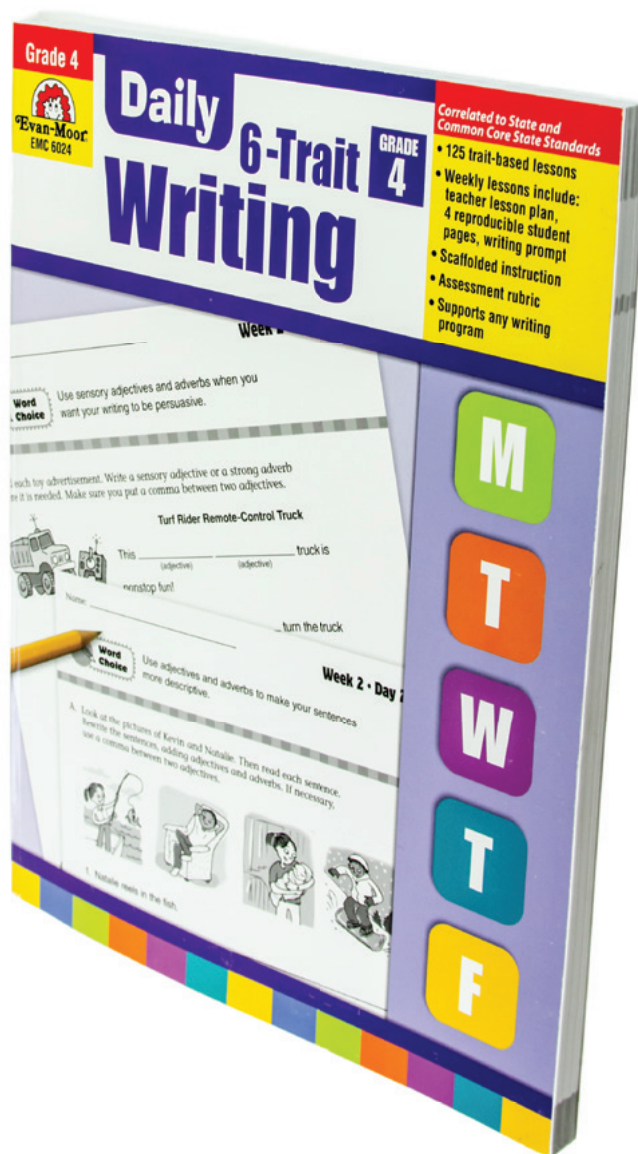


DAILY 6-TRAIT WRITING

These short daily assignments are designed to build skills without being overwhelming. We love them for their brevity, but also because they are thorough, covering content, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions (which include grammar, spelling, and mechanics). It may sound ominous, but Daily 6-Trait Writing has made it effortless.

Scheduling

Designed for 1 short lesson a day, ending after 25 weeks of school. If you prefer, you could opt to only do 3 to 4 days' work each week so that you don't finish too early. Others may wish to begin this on the 12th week of school and finish it with the rest of the materials.

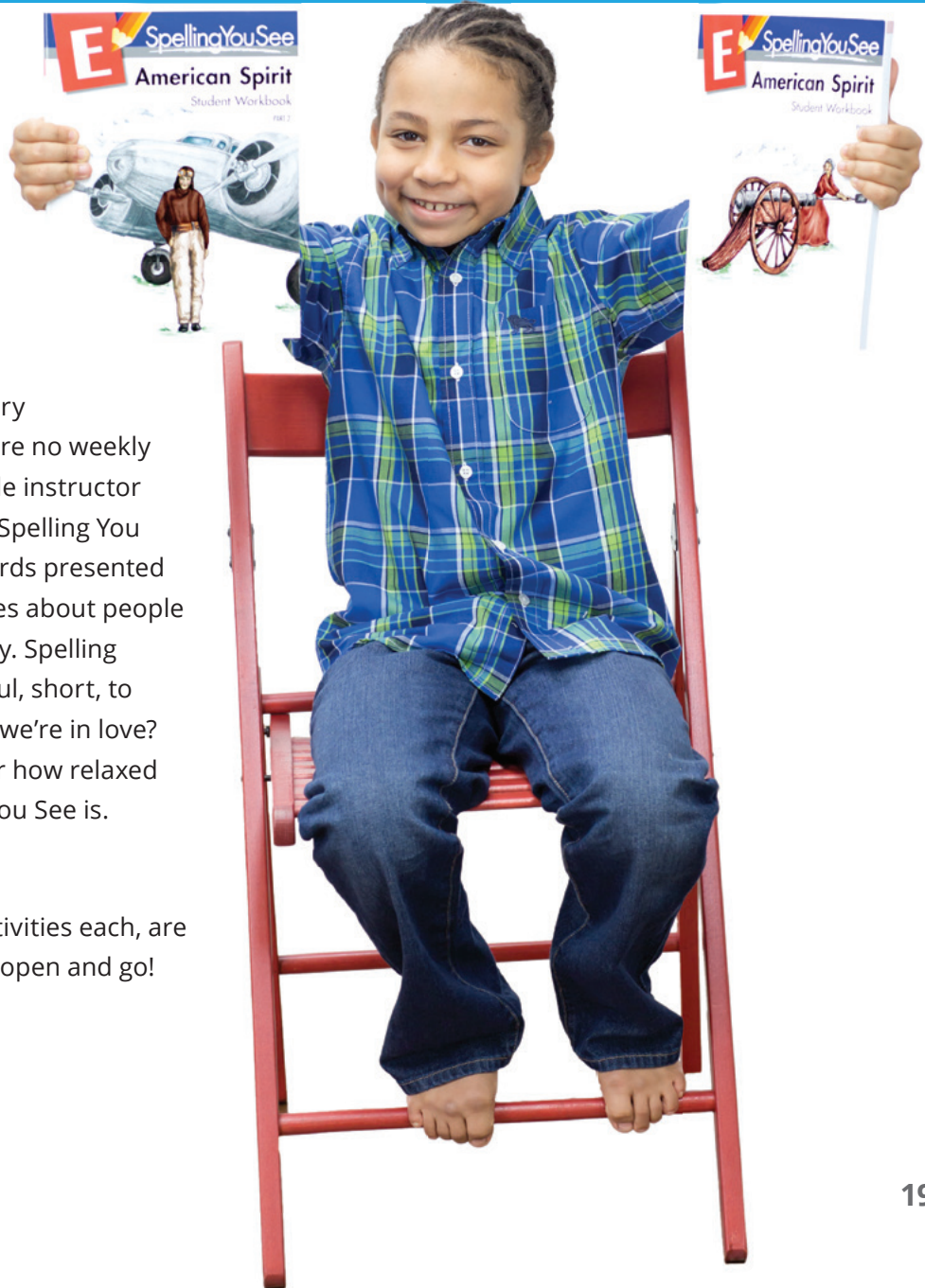


SPELLING YOU SEE - E

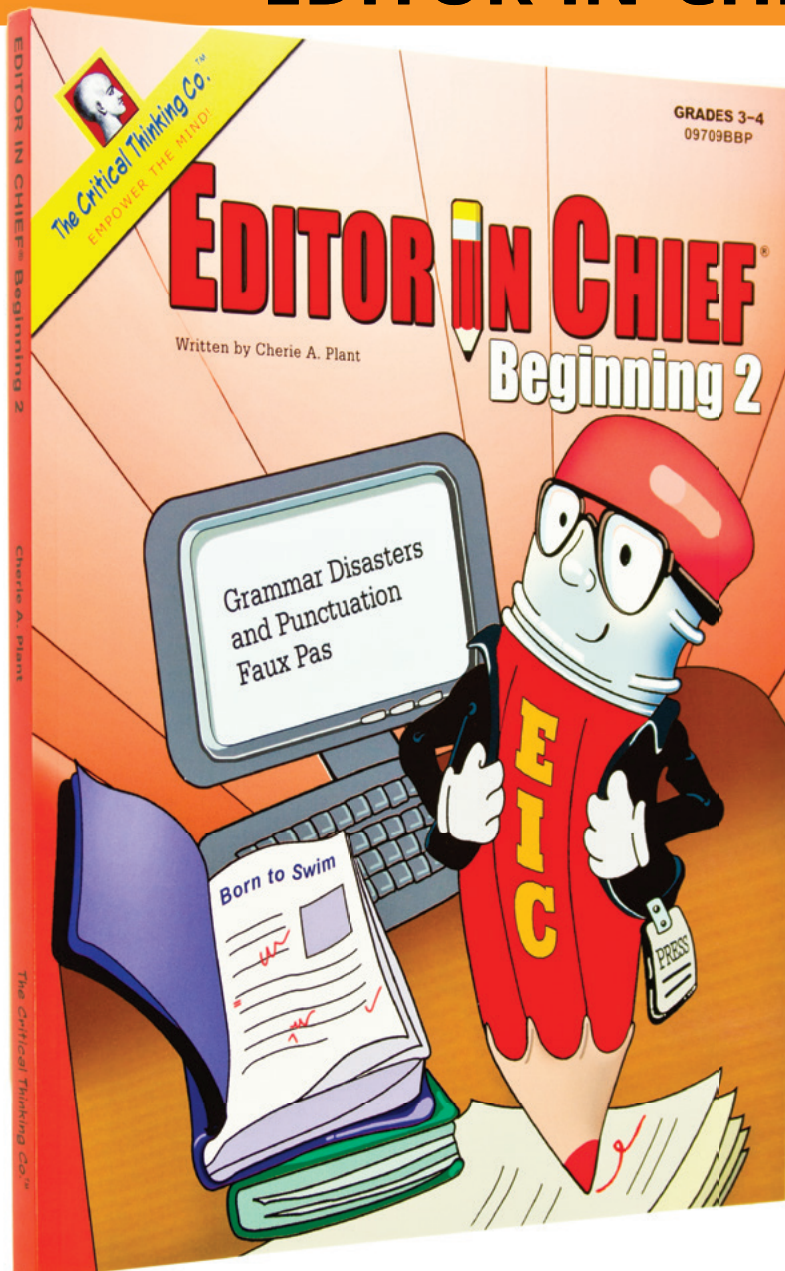
This new multisensory spelling program has us convinced that it will help your child become a confident, successful speller, naturally and at his own speed. And it has a plethora of research to back us up! Because Spelling You See encourages visual memory rather than rote memory, there are no weekly spelling lists or tests and very little instructor preparation. Each daily lesson in Spelling You See: American Spirit uses real words presented in context within nonfiction stories about people and events from American history. Spelling You See: American Spirit is colorful, short, to the point, and fun! Did I mention we're in love? You will be too when you discover how relaxed and easy to implement Spelling You See is.

Scheduling

36 weeks of work, with 5 daily activities each, are already planned out for you. Just open and go!



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF BEGINNING 2



Since no one writes perfectly on the first draft, being able to correct mistakes in one's writing is an essential part of being a great writer. But every budding writer knows how difficult it can be to spot the errors in your own work. Editor-in-Chief lets your child train his proofreading skills on someone else's work, which is both more fun and more productive!

Editor-in-Chief improves your child's grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and attention to detail using a standards-based thinking approach rather than drill and practice.

Scheduling

One activity (either a lesson or a review) a week will sharpen your child's skills without being a burden.