

Teaching Writing to a Reluctant Writer

By Linda Popolano Like many middle-school-aged boys, my son despised writing assignments when we began homeschooling. Having been forced to do voluminous writing assignments when he was still attending school, his initial reaction when I became his teacher was to protest and argue over every writing assignment I gave him. After much trial and error, I found that the best approach was to give him a lot of latitude in choosing the topics and even what days he would write, at least in the beginning. When months began to pass and his writing skills were still weaker than I thought they should be for someone his age and given his abilities in other academic areas, I decided I had to induce him to practice writing more but also had to make it fun. If I didn't, we were going to have struggles over every sentence that ever reached the paper. One of my first successful ideas was to let him register at Amazon.com to write reviews. Since he is an avid collector of both books and action figures, he was excited about the opportunity to share his views on which ones were worth the money and which weren't. Especially on the topic of action figures, he would happily write several paragraphs on the details of the paint colors, the articulation of the limbs, etc. Our original agreement was that I would not look at the reviews until they were finished, but he would not submit them until we went over them together to check spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Initially, the spelling and punctuation left a lot to be desired, but he was a lot less resistant to learning to fix these when he knew the finished product could be viewed by anyone on-line. He was also eager to get the reviews posted, because he could then read how many other customers found his comments helpful. Every time he read a new book or bought a new action figure became an opportunity for another writing lesson. Enthusiasm is truly a great teacher because, within six months, his writing (and spelling) had improved drastically. Within another few months, I was able to let him post the reviews before I proofread them (though occasionally a spelling or punctuation slipped through). Another successful idea, since he is more an artist than a writer, was to give him English assignments that involved drawing. One idea, for instance, after we had just returned from a vacation, was to design a brochure for his ideal vacation resort and hotel. His enthusiasm for the drawing totally overcame his reluctance about the writing, and he ended up doing a truly awesome job. In addition, we combined mathematics into the assignment by having him make one page of the brochure a price listing for various services with different combined package rates. I always suggest to parents who are trying to get younger children to be more proficient in reading that they pick their child's obsession, be it dinosaurs, cars, or princesses, and check out every book in the library on that topic and nothing else until the child becomes more enthusiastic about reading. To learn to enjoy writing as well, a child needs to be writing about something he or she cares about. Find your child's passion and let literacy flow around it!

About the Author

Linda Popolano is a homeschooling parent and an Independent Consultant for BRIGHT MINDS/The Critical Thinking Co. at Home. For some wonderful, effective, and fun Language Arts products for children of all ages, please visit her website at <http://www.inspirethinking.com> where you can also download FREE workbook activities and software samples. BRIGHT MINDS is also a wonderful at-home business opportunity for homeschooling parents and others who are passionate about education. For more information on either the products or the business opportunity, please e-mail Linda at inspirethinking@yahoo.com. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Linda_Popolano

Source: <http://www.edarticle.com>