

# Write with **WORLD**

A writing curriculum from the publishers of God's World News and WORLD Magazine.





Write with  
**WORLD**

**UNIT 1 / LESSON 1**

READING IMAGES AND ADVERTISEMENTS

## WHAT WRITERS WILL NEED FOR THIS LESSON:

- ▶ Your writer's journal
- ▶ Dictionary
- ▶ Thesaurus
- ▶ A timer
- ▶ A highlighter
- ▶ One or more magazines with photographs, images, advertisements

## CAPSULE 1

1.1.1

### THE STORY BEHIND THE IMAGE

**Are you a bookworm?** Or are you the opposite—your library card, if you could find it, might be covered in cobwebs? No matter whether you're an **avid** reader, a reluctant reader, or something in-between, you read more than you think. A LOT more.

And you started early. Whenever you look at an image and try to figure out what it means, you're reading. If you have younger brothers or sisters, you've probably seen them pick up a book and "read" it by looking at the pictures. Maybe you can even remember doing that yourself.

Take a look at this picture. A quick glance tells you it's a picture of a girl on a skateboard playing a guitar. But you see much more if you look carefully. How old would you guess the girl is? Why is she riding a skateboard while playing a guitar? What kind of day is it outside? Where do you think she might be? Is she enjoying herself? How does the picture make you feel?

When we "read" this image, we see a teenaged girl. Her facial expression seems to indicate that she's relaxed but concentrating. Her skateboard appears to be a longboard, which would make sense, because some people use this type of skateboard as transportation. She seems to be going somewhere: She's crossing a street. We know she's in a city because we can see tall buildings and city busses behind her. We can infer that the weather is warm because there are trees with green leaves in the background, and she's wearing shorts and flip-flops. Perhaps she's taking her guitar to a friend's house. Or maybe she's planning to perform on the street or in a park. We like this picture because the girl seems to be enjoying herself. It makes us wonder who she is and where she's going with that guitar.



◀ TAKE A LOOK AT THIS PICTURE

## CONVERSATIONS: YOUR WRITER'S JOURNAL



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

▶ TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THIS PICTURE



IN YOUR JOURNAL ▶

What questions does this picture raise in your mind? Our first question would be, “Is the surfer in control, or is he about to wipe out?”

In your Conversations Writer’s Journal (CWJ), write down your questions (at least five). Now describe the picture in writing, as we did in the example with the girl playing a guitar while riding a skateboard. Make sure you include an answer to the question, “How does the picture make you feel?”

### THE RIGHT WORD:



Remember that each time you see a word in bold, you need to look up that word in the dictionary and write the definition in your journal. For 1.1.1, look up **avid** in your dictionary. Read through all the definitions. Now read through the sentence where **avid** appears again. Choose the meaning that best defines the word as it was used in the sentence and write that definition in your CWJ.

## CAPSULE 2

1.1.2

### WHAT A PHOTOJOURNALIST SEES

Capsule 1 demonstrated how pictures tell stories and how we read those stories. This capsule concentrates on the “author” responsible for those stories/pictures: the photojournalist. In a split second, the photojournalist makes a decision to take a photograph that can tell a story for a lifetime.

Let’s look at what a photojournalist sees when he or she takes a picture and what elements make a photograph special.



## THE STORY BEHIND THE IMAGE



They're funny. And they sell a lot of chicken. If you live in one of the 40 states that **boasts** one or more Chick-fil-A restaurants, you probably recognized these cows even before you read the signs they are wearing. If you did recognize the Chick-fil-A cows, you have seen Chick-fil-A's advertisements.



Advertisements are **ubiquitous**—whether you are driving down the street, reading a magazine, watching TV, or checking your e-mail, you can't get away from companies trying to sell you something.

Advertisers' influence begins early with advertisements, commercials, and images. Did you know that by the age of two, many toddlers recognize logos for companies and products such as McDonald's, Chuck E. Cheese's, and Cheerios?

Besides feeling annoyed when a commercial interrupts your favorite television program, you may have become so used to ads that you barely notice them. But advertisers will try all kinds of tricks to get your attention. Advertisers are particularly interested in you. Why? Kids in your age group as a whole spend about \$50 billion a year.

That brings us back to the cows. Why use cows to advertise for a restaurant that doesn't even sell beef? The idea of cows making signs that promote chicken sales to save their own hides is funny. Advertisers sometime use humor to get your attention. Creating recognizable characters helps, too. The Chick-fil-A cows are not regular cows; these cows are known for spelling words incorrectly. The cows give Chick-fil-A's brand a personality. It's hard to feel connected to a chicken sandwich. But people emotionally connect with the cow characters.

Since Chick-fil-A began running the cow campaign in 1995, their food sales have at least doubled. It's estimated that they spend over \$20 million a year on advertising.

Companies would not spend such big money on ads if they didn't work. Do advertisements work on you? Can you think of anything you've bought (or wanted to buy) because you liked the ad?

## CONVERSATIONS: YOUR WRITER'S JOURNAL

1. Do a quick survey of your house. How many visible brand names or logos can you count? (Make sure to look down at the clothes and shoes you're wearing.) Don't forget shopping bags with logos, appliances and computer equipment, and cars in your garage.
2. As you go through the rest of your day, force yourself to be aware of the number of times you're bombarded with advertisements. Keep your journal handy and note which advertisements catch your attention and why.
3. Why do you think Chick-fil-A uses cows instead of chickens in their advertisements? Make a list of reasons.

### THE RIGHT WORD:



Here's a tip. The word "boasts" has a different usage than you may think. Make sure you read the entire definition and choose the right meaning for "boasts" as it is used in the sentence.

## CAPSULE 4

1.1.4

### THE MESSAGE BEHIND THE ADVERTISEMENT



Whether they're drinking soda, driving cars, or mopping floors, most people in advertisements have one thing in common: They're smiling. Often, the advertisement lists all the reasons we should buy a product ("This car gets the best gas mileage in its class. Its safety rating is unbeatable."). At the same time, the beautiful, contented-looking models in the ad silently create another message: "Look at us. We're happy. If you buy this car, you'll be happy too."

You should be using the same careful eye to examine ads as you did the surfer earlier this lesson. Why? Advertisers are constantly trying to sell you something. Each company wants us to believe its product



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is the best. When people have lots of choices, many of them fairly similar, a company must make people believe they need (or at least really want) that company's product. If a company can't get enough customers, it'll go out of business. The company must make its product stand out.

That's why it's important to look at the **tactics** advertisers use to influence you to buy products. An ad is an image with a message. Some messages are printed right on the page. Imagine a toothpaste ad. Emblazoned across the top of the page is this motto: "Blinding White toothpaste will brighten your smile!" Below are two pictures.



In one, a yellow-toothed girl stands alone, looking sad. In the next picture, teeth now white, she's smiling and laughing with a group of friends. Which child would you rather be like? What message would you get from the pictures? If you said something like, "People will like you better if you whiten your teeth with Blinding White toothpaste," you understand the advertisement's **implicit** message.

Targeting emotions can be particularly effective with tweens and teens. When trying to sell to kids your age, advertisers often focus on worries you already have. They want to make you think you need their product to fix a particular problem—yellow teeth, acne, bad breath, and so on. Ads can make you feel even more insecure about your "flaws" if you buy into their messages.

Ads often focus on outward appearance and the things we own. It is easy to get caught up in the desire to look great and have the latest phone, mp3 player, or other gadget. In general the message of advertising is, "We can fix you. We can give you a great life. Buying stuff is fun, and it will make you happy."

If you are not carefully "reading" the ads that come your way, you're more likely to let their hidden messages influence your worldview. Everyone has a worldview. The beliefs that determine how you look at and live your life make your worldview. As Christians, we need to remember that we don't belong to this world (John 15:19). We belong to Christ. Our joy and fulfillment come through him, not through products we purchase. Believing in Christ gives meaning to our lives; products and advertisements want you to believe in their product's power to improve your life.



## CONVERSATIONS: YOUR WRITER'S JOURNAL

Look through magazines until you find an advertisement that interests you. Put a copy of the advertisement into your journal.

Write a two-to-three-sentence description of the ad in your journal. (e.g. “This advertisement is for Jump-high Shoes. The picture shows a tall, sweating athlete jumping and dunking a basketball. The athlete looks happy and is wearing the shoes.”)

Then answer these questions:

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1. What is the ad selling?
2. What is the stated message?
3. Look carefully at the picture. What is its unspoken or **implicit** message?
4. What tactics does the ad use to persuade you to buy the product? Here's a list of possibilities:
  - ▶ a famous person using the product
  - ▶ value/price
  - ▶ humor
  - ▶ before/after pictures—this person looks much better after using the product
  - ▶ image—you'll be cool if you use this product
  - ▶ fear—if you don't use this product people will not like you
  - ▶ facts and statistics—9 out of 10 bicyclists ride this bike
  - ▶ top of the line or “snob” appeal
  - ▶ scarcity or limited supply appeal—this product is made of the rarest materials
  - ▶ adventure or fun appeal
  - ▶ “fix-it” appeal—this product will make you prettier, younger-looking, healthier
5. Do you like this advertisement? Why or why not?
6. In this advertisement, do you think the stated or unstated message is more likely to persuade people to buy the product? (In other words, which message is stronger?) Why?

## STYLE, DICTION, AND REVISION

### STYLE TIME

**i** When you hear the word “grammar” what springs to mind? Pages of worksheets with sentences to correct? Notes in red all over your paper? Learning grammar is necessary to writing well. The rules are there for a reason. For instance, if you use vague pronouns all the time, your readers get confused. Knowing rules—such as how to properly construct a sentence—will improve your style. That’s why we’re calling this section “Style Time.” The more you know about how grammar works, the more comfortable you will be experimenting with sentences and language. And people who are comfortable with language make better writers.

You’ll be glad to know that research shows that students learn better in real-life situations. That’s why when we work on grammar and style, we’ll have you examine your own writing. We’ll focus on ways that you can improve your writing in each “Style Time.”

The first “Style Time” is an easy one—”its” and “it’s.”

People confuse the two all the time. Here’s why: “its” is possessive. Often, a possessive requires an apostrophe. If I’m talking about the car that belongs to John, I would say “John’s car.” But some possessives—like her, his, and its—don’t require an apostrophe. For example, if we were talking about a car’s tire, we would write “its tire,” NOT “it’s tire.”

“It’s” is a contraction, or a way to put together the two words “it is.” So if you write “it’s tire,” you’re really writing, “it is tire,” which doesn’t make sense.

### REVISE:

Now, take a pencil and start back at the beginning of your journal. Circle each use of *its* or *it’s*. Read each sentence containing one of these words aloud. If you’ve written *it’s* substitute the words *it is*. Does the sentence still make sense? If not, you need to change to the possessive *its* instead.

**Technology tip:** *If you’re keeping your journal as a computer file or if you write a draft on the computer, use the “search” feature of your word-processing program to find each use of it’s and its in your writing. Read each sentence containing its or it’s aloud, replacing with it is. If it is doesn’t make sense, its is the right choice. If it is does make sense, use the contraction it’s.*



◀ IN YOUR JOURNAL



IN YOUR JOURNAL ►

## CONVERSATIONS: YOUR WRITER'S JOURNAL

I'm sure you've noticed that the journal-writing sections are called CWJ: Conversations ... Writer's Journal. That may seem a little strange—how is writing in a journal a conversation—unless you're talking to yourself?

Ideally, it will become a place that you begin conversations. It's nice to have a place to keep information and “think” on paper a bit where no one is judging you or criticizing your ideas.

And it should be a conversation-starter. From time to time, your parents will read through your journal. When they find something interesting you've written, they may respond with a question to get you to think a bit more about what you've said and then respond to their questions. We hope you and your parents will get a dialogue going that will get you excited about some of your ideas.

It's okay to have some bad ideas in your journal. Putting your thoughts down on paper allows you to really examine them and see if they make sense or not. Just like an inventor may try lots of different formulas or designs before coming up with the one that works, writers sort through lots of ideas before they come up with a brilliant one.

Today, we want you to look back through what you've written so far. Highlight your most interesting section. Write a sentence or two telling what you like about it.

Also, now that you understand the meaning behind CWJ, we will no longer refer to the section as CWJ: Conversations ... Writer's Journal. We'll use the simple abbreviation CWJ.

## THE RIGHT WORD



For this section, you'll need your thesaurus and your dictionary. Over the course of Lesson 1, you defined five words. Here are the words in context.

1. No matter whether you're an **avid** reader, a reluctant reader, or something in-between, you read more than you think.
2. If you live in one of the 40 states that **boasts** one or more Chick-fil-A restaurants, you probably recognized these cows even before you read the signs they're wearing.
3. Advertisements are **ubiquitous**—whether you're driving down the street, reading a magazine, watching TV, or checking your e-mail, you can't get away from companies trying to sell you something.
4. That's why it's important to look at the **tactics** advertisers use to influence you to buy products.
5. If you said something like, “People will like you better if you whiten your teeth with Blinding White

toothpaste,” you’re reading the **implicit** message.

Using your thesaurus, try to find the BEST word to replace the bold word in the sentence. This can be tricky. Take for instance, the word **boasts**:

In the *Concise Oxford American Thesaurus*, the word **boast** lists two different meanings for the word **boast** as a verb. The first lists as synonyms brag, crow, swagger, swank, gloat, show off, exaggerate, overstate.

The second meaning is the one we’re looking for:

- ▶ Possess
- ▶ Have
- ▶ Own
- ▶ Enjoy
- ▶ Pride oneself/itself on.

Still, though, not all of these synonyms mean the same thing—the state may **have** a Chick-fil-A—but the state doesn’t **own** it.

So in this case, we would rewrite the sentence like this: “If you live in one of the 40 states that **has** one or more Chick-fil-A restaurants, you probably recognized these cows even before you read the signs they’re wearing.”

There! We have done one for you. Now do the other four. You may find you need your dictionary—sometimes the synonyms may be unfamiliar words. In order to decide which one is the best fit, you should look up any words you don’t already know.