

# Oak Meadow

## English Manual for Middle School

Oak Meadow, Inc.

Post Office Box 1346

Brattleboro, Vermont 05302-1346

[oakmeadow.com](http://oakmeadow.com)

Item #b072068

v.0118

©2018 Oak Meadow, Inc.

All rights reserved.

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of Oak Meadow, Inc.



# Table of Contents

---

Introduction . . . . .	1
Adjective . . . . .	2
Adverb . . . . .	3
Analogy, Metaphor, and Simile . . . . .	5
Articles . . . . .	8
Capitalization . . . . .	9
Citing Your Source . . . . .	12
Concise Writing . . . . .	18
Confusing Word Pairs . . . . .	21
Conjunctions . . . . .	26
Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers . . . . .	29
Direct and Indirect Objects . . . . .	32
Direct and Indirect Quotations . . . . .	34
Frequently Misspelled Words . . . . .	36
Homonyms . . . . .	39

Independent and Dependent Clauses . . . . .	42
Interjections . . . . .	44
Negatives and Double Negatives . . . . .	45
Note-Taking Skills . . . . .	47
Nouns . . . . .	50
Outlining . . . . .	52
Paragraph Forms . . . . .	55
Parallel Construction . . . . .	59
Parts of Speech . . . . .	61
Plagiarism . . . . .	62
Possessive Nouns . . . . .	64
Possessives and Contractions . . . . .	66
Prefixes . . . . .	68
Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases . . . . .	70
Prewriting Techniques . . . . .	74
Pronouns . . . . .	76
Punctuation . . . . .	79
Sentence Construction . . . . .	81
Shifts in Tense and Person . . . . .	89

Spelling Rules . . . . .	92
Spelling Tips . . . . .	96
Subject Variations . . . . .	99
Subject/verb Agreement . . . . .	102
Subjects and Predicates . . . . .	105
Suffixes . . . . .	108
Synonyms and Antonyms . . . . .	110
Topic Sentences and Thesis Statements . . .	111
Verb Tenses and Auxiliary Verbs . . . . .	113
Verbs . . . . .	119
Writing a Business Letter . . . . .	121
Writing a Report . . . . .	123
Writing a Short Story . . . . .	126
Writing an Essay . . . . .	131
Writing Process . . . . .	136
Writing Styles . . . . .	139



# Adverbs

---

Adverbs tell how, when, or where something is done. They are similar to adjectives in that they make a sentence much more interesting and informative; adjectives describe the noun and adverbs describe the verb. For instance, consider this sentence:

*The cat walked down the lane.*

Now, let's see how that sentence can be enhanced by using an **adverb**:

*The cat walked **jauntily** down the lane.*

There are different types of adverbs. Here are some examples of each:

<b>HOW (adverbs of manner, degree, or frequency)</b>	<b>WHEN (adverbs of time)</b>	<b>WHERE (adverbs of place)</b>
quickly	afterwards	above
slowly	now	here
softly	soon	outside
almost	then	downstairs

<b>HOW (adverbs of manner, degree, or frequency)</b>	<b>WHEN (adverbs of time)</b>	<b>WHERE (adverbs of place)</b>
very	yesterday	below
usually	immediately	there



# Analogies, Metaphors, and Similes

---

Analogies, metaphors, and similes are writing techniques that writers use to compare things that are different. These comparisons point out similarities to help emphasize certain qualities. Many writers have trouble understanding the difference between these three techniques, so don't worry if you do, too. The more you work with them, the easier it will be to differentiate between them.

A **simile** points to how two unlike things are like each other. The words *like* or *as* are used in a simile to make the comparison obvious. Here are some examples of similes:

*A quiet mind is like a calm lake.*

*The students were as busy as bees.*

A **metaphor** makes the comparison by describing one thing as another very different thing. To say someone is “wet behind the ears” is an old metaphor meaning the person is young and inexperienced; it doesn't literally mean the person has wet ears. Here are some examples of metaphors:

*The kindergarten classroom was a merry-go-round of color.*

*After the party, the house was a train wreck.*



An **analogy** takes the comparison one step further by elaborating on it, usually by referring to something familiar to help clarify something more complex or less familiar. Analogies can use metaphors or similes (or both).

*The smog darkened the sky, burying the town under layers of moldy, suffocating blankets.*

*The playful mood spread until the three dogs became like clowns on the center stage, performing a comedy routine as they grinned at the crowd.*

All three literary techniques make comparisons between different things. The subtle differences between similes, metaphors, and analogies are sometimes easier to grasp when the techniques are seen side by side.

**Simile:** My dreams are like delicate birds

**Metaphor:** My dreams are delicate birds.

**Analogy:** My dreams are delicate birds, frantically beating against the cage of my life.

These writing techniques can make your writing more vivid and expressive. However, it's easy to go overboard, especially with analogies. A poor analogy uses language that doesn't match the intended result.

**Bad analogy:** *The dancer lifted her arms delicately and turned her head to the side, like she was sniffing her armpit and wondering whether she remembered to wear deodorant.*

**Why it is bad:** "sniffing her armpit" does not contribute to the overall impression of the graceful dancer.

**Better:** *The dancer lifted her arms delicately and turned her head to the side, like a gazelle gazing into the distance, ready to leap across the field.*



# Articles

---

**Articles** are a special kind of an adjective (some people consider them a separate part of speech). They give us information about a noun. There are only three articles: *a*, *an*, *the*.

*A* and *an* are **indefinite articles**, and *the* is a **definite article**. This means that *the* is used to refer to a specific noun, while *a* and *an* simply identify general classes of things. *She stole the briefcase* indicates that a particular, individual briefcase was stolen, whereas *She stole a briefcase* means that some briefcase somewhere was stolen, but doesn't tell which one.

While you are probably quite clear about using *a* before a word that begins with a consonant and *an* before a word that begins with a vowel, there are some tricky words. They all begin with the letter H. This is because the letter H can have a hard sound (*hat*, *hurry*, *history*) or be unpronounced (*hour*, *honor*, *honest*, *heir*). Checking the pronunciation will clue you in to the correct indefinite article: *an hour*, *an honor*, *a hat*, *a historical event*.



## Capitalization

---

There are many different instances in which you would capitalize a word. In general, the first word of every sentence must be capitalized and every proper noun (or name) needs to be capitalized. Here are some capitalization rules to remember:

- Always write the word *I* as a capital letter, no matter where you use it.
  - Example: Today is the day I get to go to the library!
- Capitalize words that refer to relatives when using them as a name, but don't capitalize words that refer to relatives if you use a possessive pronoun (like *my* or *your*) in front of them.
  - Example: Today Uncle Peter and Dad went to the concert. My uncle and my dad both love music.
- Use a capital letter to begin the name of a pet, but do not capitalize animal species unless they contain a proper noun (grizzly bear, Bengal tiger, border collie, Labrador retriever, etc.)
  - Example: I have a German shepherd named Petey.

- Capitalize a title such as mister, doctor, general, or president when it is attached to a specific person’s name.
  - Examples: Mr. White, Dr. Jones, General Westmoreland, President Carter
- Use a capital letter to begin each important word in the name of a place.
  - Example: I am going to visit the Smithsonian Museum and the Washington Monument.
- Use a capital letter to begin the name of a country, the name of a nationality, or a word made from the name of a country or a nationality.
  - Examples: France, French, Europe, African, Indian
- Capitalize days, months, and holidays (Monday, Tuesday, January, February, Christmas, Passover, Halloween). Do not capitalize the seasons: spring, summer, fall or autumn, and winter.
- Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.
  - Example: Mother said, “When are you going to the store?”
- Capitalize the first word and every important word in the title of a book, a story, a poem, or a song.
  - Examples: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or *Charlotte’s Web*.
- Capitalize Earth and other planets (Venus, Mars, etc.), but do not capitalize *sun* and *moon*.

- Capitalize names of deities and sacred documents.
  - Examples: God, the Bible, the Torah, Allah, the Koran, Krishna, Buddha

There are many words that get capitalized sometimes but not always, depending on how the word is used. If a noun is used in a general way, you will usually use lowercase letters. If a noun is used to reference a specific place or person, you will usually use capital letters. Here are some examples:

- I love going to the **ocean**. We visited the Indian **Ocean**.
- My **dad** makes the best bread. I told **Dad** I like his bread more than any other.
- We always love it when **Uncle** Raymond visits. We have fun when my **uncle** visits.
- I live on Elm **Street**, all the way at the end of the **street**.