

Grade 6

English

Coursebook



Oak Meadow

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Introduction

For the Student

Welcome to Grade 6 English! This introduction will help you get your year off to a good start. Please read the entire introduction before beginning lesson 1.

This book is written to you, the student, and it will guide you through a full year of learning. It is expected that you will have a parent, tutor, or teacher to help you. Make sure to ask for help whenever you need it.

This course is meant to be done in conjunction with Oak Meadow Grade 6 Ancient Civilizations Coursebook. You will find that the essays, grammar exercises, reading, and vocabulary for each English lesson all pertain to the study of ancient civilizations. This course can be done independently by simply adapting the assignments related to the social studies work to suit other studies that you are doing.

Here are some tips to help your learning experience go more smoothly:

- Before you begin, look over this coursebook to become familiar with how it is set up. Look at the table of contents and scan a few lessons. See what is in the appendix (that's the section at the back of the book).
- When you begin a new lesson, always read through all of the assignments and activities first to get an idea of what you will be doing in that lesson, and do the reading assignment before completing any written assignments.
- Use the assignment checklist at the beginning of each lesson to mark when you complete an assignment and to see what still needs to be done. This will help you plan your time well.
- If a writing assignment asks for one or more pages of writing, you can assume that one page equals two or three paragraphs of three to eight sentences each. Use your best judgment—two three-sentence paragraphs are not going to equal one page.

It is important to find a notebook, binder, or expandable file to keep your work in, so that nothing gets lost. Be sure to keep everything until the end of the school year.

You will be expanding your vocabulary in many new ways this year. You will be asked to define vocabulary words and use them in sentences in almost every lesson. These are very important skills, so let's take a moment to look at each separately.

Writing Definitions for Vocabulary Words

In order to find the most appropriate definition for each of your vocabulary words, you will need to use a good, up-to-date dictionary. There are dictionaries available online, but we recommend that you use a print dictionary. Print dictionaries allow you to see more than one word at a time and to practice looking words up alphabetically. Perusing a dictionary is an excellent way to discover new and interesting words. You will find useful tips for using a dictionary in the English manual found in the appendix of this coursebook.

As you may already know, some words have more than one meaning. For example, the word “light” has many definitions; it can be used as an adjective, a noun, or a verb. (We refer to these words as “parts of speech.” The English language has eight parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.)

Please provide only one definition for each part of speech. Many words have several definitions, but dictionaries tend to list the most commonly used definition first. You need to include that one only.

Depending on the dictionary you use, some of the definitions will be quite long. There is no need to write down definitions word for word if you can think up a more concise way to do it. However, please do not include the word itself, or a variation of the word, in your definition. For example, when defining the word “light,” make sure your definition does not include the word “light,” “lighting,” “lit,” or “lightness.” Putting definitions in your own words is an excellent way to see if you understand what the word means.

Using Vocabulary Words in the Context of a Sentence

Writing sentences that contain vocabulary words gives you an opportunity to make sure you know what the word really means. It’s one thing to memorize a definition, and a completely different thing to be able to use a word correctly when we speak and write.

When writing sentences for your vocabulary words, please make sure that you take the time to come up with sentences that show that you understand the meaning of the word. For example, when writing a sentence for the word “light,” avoid sentences like this one, “I looked at the light.” While this sentence is technically correct, it does not convey your understanding of the word. In this context, “light” could mean “turtle,” “sunset,” “unicorn,” etc. However, in this sentence, “I love the light in my room when the sun rises and shines through my window,” the meaning of “light” is made clear.

Course Materials and Organization

This coursebook contains all the lesson plans for a full year of sixth grade English. The following materials are recommended to be used in conjunction with this coursebook:

Maroo of the Winter Cave by Ann Turnbull

The Golden Bull: A Mesopotamian Adventure by Marjorie Cowley

Once There Was, Twice There Wasn't: Fifty Turkish Folktales by Michael Shelton

The Rainbow People by Lawrence Yep

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths

The Eagle of the Ninth by Rosemary Sutcliff

1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts from Muslim Civilization by National Geographic

Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess by Richard Platt

The Adventures of Robin Hood by Roger Lancelyn Green

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

The Ugly One by Leanne Statland Ellis

It is also suggested that you have the following:

- Dictionary
- Colored pencils
- Index cards for note-taking

This coursebook is divided into 36 lessons. Each lesson will usually take one week to complete, and will include the following sections:

Assignment Summary: You'll find a checklist of assignments at the beginning of each lesson. This lets you check off assignments as you complete them and see at a glance what still needs to be done.

Learning Assessment: At the end of each lesson you will find a learning assessment form for your parent/teacher to keep track of your progress and stay attuned to the key competencies that are being developed. Some parents may want to create their own rubrics or bypass formal assessment entirely for the time being. The learning assessment forms can provide an easy way to document your development for reporting purposes.

For Enrolled Students: This section is for families who are enrolled in Oak Meadow School and who are sending their work to an Oak Meadow teacher. It provides information and reminders about how and when to submit work.

Appendix: The appendix of this coursebook includes a comprehensive list of book suggestions related to the study of ancient civilizations. In addition, the appendix contains the English manual that will be used throughout the year.

It is suggested that you use a planner to schedule your tasks for the week. You can use it to coordinate field trips, library time, and projects that need some advance preparation. Jot down notes about what worked well, what needs more attention, and what you'd like to save to work on at a later time. Your weekly planner can help you keep track of what you did each week.

For the Parent

Welcome to a new year in home learning! It is likely that your sixth grader will welcome ways to take charge of their learning, so you are encouraged to approach the year ahead in a collaborative way. You can help your son or daughter learn time-management skills and develop independent study skills. Despite your child's growing autonomy, they still need your guidance. Your presence and support are essential for a successful year of independent learning.

Before work begins on each lesson, it will be important to acquire the necessary reference materials. It is a good idea to look ahead to future lessons so that you have an idea of what to expect. It is also a good idea to make note of any lengthy assignments that might take extra time to complete in your daily schedule.

Some lessons require you to obtain a book of your choice, so you may want to plan ahead with your library to make sure these books are available when you need them, or you can purchase them or find a digital version of the book.

In addition to the assigned reading and any additional books you choose to read, this course expects that students will use additional reference materials. Help your child learn how to find a variety of resources in the library, including encyclopedias, magazines, and nonfiction books on a variety of related topics. There are also websites that include numerous research resources, including atlases, encyclopedias, news services, and dictionaries.

Many lessons offer numerous options for further study—these are entirely optional. They are intended for students who wish to explore a particular topic in more detail. We suggest you use your local library or a digital library website to help locate these books.

It is suggested that students use a planner to schedule assignments, activities, and other tasks for the week, such as field trips, library time, and projects that need some advance preparation. The weekly planner can help you keep track of your student's progress over time, which can make year-end reporting and documentation much easier.

Assessment Measures in Home Learning

Assessments in home learning are usually done through a combination of informal observation, the creation of a portfolio of student work, and cumulative activities that are designed to evaluate learning. You can use a weekly planner and the learning assessment form to record daily or weekly notes in order to document student progress and the learning process. Things that would be important to note are what aspects are challenging or difficult, what aspects your student has a natural affinity toward, what questions your student asks, what new ideas spring up during the course of the week, and what new discoveries or progress on a skill were made. These notes will help you to keep track of your student's progress and know where and when extra help is needed.

The learning assessment included at the end of each lesson can be used as a guide to your student's skill development, but the process of learning and working with the material in an exploratory way is equally important. Ultimately, it's not the end result, but rather the pathway that develops capacities with your child.

Educators use both formative and summative assessments to gauge student learning and track it over time, and this course is designed for you to do the same. *Formative assessment* happens each week, “forming” as you watch your student work. Each week you will notice where your student struggles, where more time is needed to grasp a concept or practice using a new skill, which aspects of the work are particularly enjoyable or easy. These observations will help inform your next steps. Using ongoing formative assessments, your teaching support can adapt to your child's needs as the year unfolds. *Summative assessment* provides a summary of the student's learning at a particular point. Essays and reports, the year-end grammar exam, and substantial projects that span several lessons all offer the opportunity for summative assessment.

Assessing your child's progress will become a natural part of your work each week. As the months pass, you will begin to understand how far your child has come. Keeping anecdotal notes throughout the year will provide you with a comprehensive picture of your child's development.

Information for Students Enrolled in Oak Meadow School

As an enrolled student, you will benefit from regular feedback and support from your Oak Meadow teacher. Your Oak Meadow teacher is also available to help with questions you may have about assignments or about your student's progress. Communication is essential to developing a great relationship with your teacher during the school year.

If you are enrolled in Oak Meadow School, you'll find a reminder at the end of each lesson that instructs how to document your student's progress and when to submit your work to your Oak Meadow teacher. Continue working on your next lessons while you are waiting for your teacher to send feedback on your child's work. After you have submitted the first 18 lessons, you will receive a first-semester evaluation and grade. At the end of 36 lessons, you will receive a final evaluation and grade.

Submitting Work to your Oak Meadow Teacher

You are welcome to submit your student's work using email, Google docs, or postal mail. You will find detailed instructions on how to submit your work in the Oak Meadow Parent Handbook.

Here are a few tips:

- Please make sure to carefully label each submission. Teachers receive many submissions each week, and we want to account for your student's work.

- If you send work through the postal mail, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope so your teacher can return the work to you. Receiving the return package from your teacher is an exciting part of the distance learning relationship for many children, and we want to make sure the materials make it back to you in a timely manner. Because regular postal mail is not tracked, it's important to keep copies of everything you send.
- If you choose to send work digitally, Microsoft Word documents, a shared Google doc, and Adobe Acrobat PDFs are the easiest formats for our teachers to work with. When in doubt, please check in with your teacher to determine the best format for receiving work.
- Some of the assignments will instruct you to send to your teacher an audio or video recording of your student performing, reciting, or giving an oral presentation. You can make digital recordings using a camera, computer, or cell phone and send your recordings to your teacher in MP3 format. If you do not have the equipment to make a digital recording, discuss other options with your Oak Meadow teacher.
- It is a good idea to keep track of when lessons are submitted and when they are returned. With so many important pieces of work going back and forth in the mail, mistakes do occur, and a good record-keeping system helps clear things up. You can use a weekly planner for this purpose.

When both the family and the teacher keep to a regular schedule for submitting and returning lessons, everyone benefits, especially the student. Timely feedback, encouragement, and guidance from a teacher are key elements for all learners, and this is especially important in distance learning.

Leap into Language

The ability to express oneself and communicate with others through the written word is a unique hallmark of humanity. We hope that this year's study of the English language will help your child develop these essential capacities in an enjoyable and purposeful way.

We wish you and your child a successful and rewarding year of learning!

Lesson

1

Sentence Structures

We begin the year by looking at how to express your ideas in a concise, effective way. Sentences are the building blocks of any writing. Every sentence must include a subject and a predicate to be complete. In order to make your writing interesting and engaging, you'll want to use a variety of sentence types, lengths, and construction.

When writing anything longer than a few sentences, organizing your thoughts into paragraphs helps you stay on-topic and present your ideas in a logical order. Paragraphs are the building blocks for essays, reports, stories, research papers, and more. No matter how big an assignment might be, it can be broken down into more manageable chunks by using paragraphs.

Paragraphs can be any length, but most contain the following:

- Topic sentence: this gives an idea of what the paragraph is about
- Detail sentences: also called the body of the paragraph, this part gives important information related to the topic
- Concluding sentence: this summarizes the topic or relates it to another topic (which often leads to a new paragraph)

In the reading assignment for this lesson, you'll learn more about sentences, paragraphs, and how to create strong, effective writing.

This week you have several writing assignments in social studies.

Use complete sentences in all your writing assignments, and check to be sure each one begins with a capital letter and has ending punctuation (period, exclamation point, or question mark).

To organize your thoughts for your essays, list the topic sentences that you will use, and then develop paragraphs of different lengths around each of these topic sentences. Each paragraph should focus on just one general piece of information. If you find yourself including information that goes into another general topic, start a new paragraph.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Begin reading *Maroo of the Winter Caves*.
- Read *Sentence Types, Subjects and Predicates, Sentence Structures, and Paragraph Forms* in the English manual.
- Define each vocabulary word and use it in a sentence.
- Take a spelling quiz.
- Write examples of different types of sentences.
- Identify subjects and predicates in sentences.
- Write sentences with compound subjects and predicates.

Reading

Begin reading *Maroo of the Winter Caves* by Ann Turnbull. You have two weeks to read this book. You will be answering questions about the book in the next lesson. You may want to look at the questions before you begin reading.

Read the following sections in the English manual found in the appendix:

- Sentence Types
- Subjects and Predicates
- Sentence Structures
- Paragraph Forms

Assignments

1. Each week you will work with a list of vocabulary and spelling words. Vocabulary words will usually relate to the material you are studying in social studies. In addition, you will often be asked to choose additional words to add as spelling words. Spelling words can include words that you have difficulty spelling or words that have unusual spellings. The vocabulary words and spelling words are combined into a single list of about ten words. To make it easy, we'll just refer to this list as your vocabulary list, even though it has spelling words in it, too.

Here are your vocabulary words for this week. Try to think about these words in the context of your ancient civilization studies.

mammoth spear bola
archaeology thong prehistoric

Add a few more spelling words to this list.

Please define each of the six vocabulary words above without using the root word or a related word. Use a dictionary to look up each word, but try to write the definition in your own words. (Please refer to “Using a Dictionary” in the English manual if you find it challenging to look up words.)

Finally, use each word in a sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning. Underline each vocabulary word. Here is an example of a sentence that shows the meaning of the word:

On his last archaeological dig, my brother found an ivory tusk that belonged to a baby mammoth.

2. Practice writing the words from your vocabulary list (remember, that includes your spelling words as well) and using them in conversation this week. Each week, find new ways to work with the words to help you memorize them and incorporate them into your speaking vocabulary. Here are some ideas of ways to practice with your word list each week:

- Practice writing them down.
- Write them with colored chalk on a blackboard.
- Write them in the air with your finger.
- Spell them aloud.
- Play a fill-in-the-blank spelling game (have a parent write blanks for certain letters and you fill in the rest).
- Use Scrabble letters to spell the words and then try to connect them together into a Scrabble grid.
- Write spelling/vocabulary words using alphabet refrigerator magnets.
- Practice writing words with a stick in sand or with your toe on a plush rug.
- Spell them aloud forward and then backward.
- Have a parent say the first three letters of the word and you fill in the rest; switch places and you begin the word and have your parent finish it.
- Write a silly poem or sentence that uses all the words at once (it has to make some sort of sense!).
- Make a crossword puzzle using the words (graph paper makes this easier).
- Spell the words aloud with a partner, each one saying one letter at a time.
- Spell words using pipe cleaners, alphabet noodles, dough, etc.
- Recite spelling words as you jump rope, skip, bounce a ball, etc., calling out each letter of the word in rhythm with the beat.
- Print the word on a piece of paper and then cut it into letters. Scramble the letters and then see how fast you can recreate the word. Do this with several words at once for a real challenge.

At the end of the week, have your parent give you a spelling quiz. If you misspell any words on your quiz, you can add them to the list for next week.

3. After reading “Sentence Types” and “Sentence Structures” in the English manual, write one example of each of the following:
 - a. Declarative sentence
 - b. Interrogative sentence
 - c. Exclamatory sentence
 - d. Imperative sentence
 - e. Simple sentence

- f. Compound sentence
- g. Complex sentence

Try to make your sentences interesting! They can be about any topic you like.

4. Choose three of the sentences you composed for assignment #3, and indicate the subject and predicate of each sentence. Using colored pencils, underline or shade the **subject in blue** and the **predicate in red**. Remember, the subject includes the noun and all the words related to the noun, and the predicate includes the verb and all the words related to the verb.
5. Write one sentence with a compound predicate and one with a compound subject.

Further Study

In many lessons, you will find a list of books that you might be interested in reading. These books are related to the ancient civilizations you are studying in social studies. These books are optional reading assignments, but try to read at least one book from these lists every four to six weeks. Feel free to browse the books listed in the Further Study sections of the next few lessons before you make your choice.

- *A Way of His Own* by T.A. Dyer
- *Cave Beyond Time* by Malcolm Bosse

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

You will be sending a sample of work from this lesson to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of lesson 2. In the meantime, feel free to contact your teacher if you have any questions about the assignments or the learning process. Use your assignment summary checklist, weekly planner, and the learning assessment form to keep track of your student's progress. You will be sending this documentation to your teacher every two weeks (with each submission of student work).

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

ENGLISH	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Writes word definitions in own words				
Uses vocabulary words in sentences that convey the word meaning				
Applies spelling rules and memorizes spelling words				
Differentiates between sentence types (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, imperative)				
Identifies simple, compound, and complex sentences				
Identifies subjects and predicates in sentences				
Composes sentences with compound subjects and predicates				
Uses a variety of sentences in writing				
Composes paragraphs with topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences				
Uses paragraphs to organize ideas into topics				

LITERATURE	In Progress	Completed	Notes
<i>Maroo of the Winter Caves</i>			
Free-choice book:			
Free-choice book:			

SPELLING QUIZ	Score # Correct/Total #	Notes
1		

Lesson

2

Nouns

There are three types of nouns: common nouns, proper nouns, and pronouns. Each of these can be in singular form, plural form, or possessive form (either singular or plural possessive).

There are many different types of common nouns. You are probably most familiar with *concrete nouns*, which are physical things you can touch, such as a tree, chair, dog, fence, or nose.

Another type of noun is an *abstract noun*. These words name things that are ideas, such as freedom, loyalty, joy, courage, and love. Here are more examples of abstract nouns:

beauty	confidence	power
belief	curiosity	pride
boredom	delight	trust
childhood	independence	truth
compassion	laughter	wealth

A third type of common noun is a *collective noun*, which refers to a group of things. You probably use collective nouns all the time without realizing it. Think of how we discuss groups of animals: a *herd* of horses, a *pod* of dolphins, a *gaggle* of geese, or a *flock* of chickens. These words are collective nouns. Of course, collective nouns can also refer to human beings and things. Here are more examples of collective nouns:

army	committee	jury
audience	crew	pack
band	crowd	staff
bunch	family	team
choir	gang	tribe

You will learn more about nouns in this lesson.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Finish reading *Maroo of the Winter Caves*.
- Read Nouns and Possessives in the English manual.
- Alphabetize and define each vocabulary word and use it in a sentence.
- Take a spelling quiz.
- Use abstract and collective nouns in sentences.
- Use common and proper nouns in singular, plural, and possessives forms.
- Write sentences using pronouns in singular, plural, and possessive forms.
- Answer questions about the plot and characters in *Maroo of the Winter Caves*.

Reading

Finish reading *Maroo of the Winter Caves*.

Read the Nouns and Possessives section in the English manual. Pay special attention to the spelling rules for forming plural nouns and forming possessive nouns.

Assignments

1. Alphabetize the vocabulary list below and then define each word without using the root word or a related word. Use each word in a sentence in a way that shows you understand the meaning of the word. Underline each vocabulary word in the sentences. (You do not need to add additional spelling words this week.)

arid code cuneiform
archaeologist plains dowel
zodiac wedge bas-relief constellation

2. Work with your vocabulary words in a variety of ways throughout the week. You may want to take a practice spelling quiz midweek to find out which words you still need to focus on. Take a spelling quiz at the end of the week.
3. Write two sentences using abstract nouns and two sentences using collective nouns. Try to come up with new examples, if you can (you can use the words on the lists if you need to). When you have written your sentences, use colored pencils to underline or shade each **noun in blue**.
4. Write sentences using concrete common nouns and proper nouns in each of the following forms: singular, plural, possessive singular, and plural possessive. You will be using eight noun forms in all. You can write eight separate sentences or you can combine two or more noun forms in a single sentence, as in the following example:

Traditionally, **Egyptians** have shown a fascination with **cats**, and **cats' portraits** decorate many ancient **tombs**.

In this example, there are three plural common nouns (cats, portraits, and tombs), one proper noun (Egyptians), and one plural possessive (cats').

After composing your sentences, underline or shade each **noun in blue**. Do not use the examples given in the English manual—create your own original sentences.

5. Write sentences using pronouns in each of the following forms: singular, plural, singular possessive, and plural possessive. After each sentence, identify the type of pronouns used. If you use more than one pronoun in a sentence, label all of them, as in the example below:

Spencer said **he** would meet **us** at the skate park, and **he** would bring **his** extra skateboard with **him**.

singular pronouns: he, him

plural pronouns: us

singular possessive: his

If you combine pronouns in a single sentence, you will probably only have to write one or two sentences. When combining pronouns, however, make sure the sentence is very clear about whom each pronoun refers to. Underline or shade each **pronoun in blue**.

6. Once you have completed *Maroo of the Winter Caves*, answer the following questions.
- What are some of the ways their dog Rivo helps Maroo and Otak?
 - What are the challenges Maroo and Otak face crossing the White Mountain?
 - How does the tribe view the spirit world? How do their views influence their actions?
 - What role do stories and songs play in the lives of Maroo's people?

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

At the end of this lesson, you will be sending the first batch of work to your Oak Meadow teacher along with your assignment summary checklist, learning assessment form, or any alternate form of documentation. Include any additional notes about the lesson work or anything you'd like your teacher to know. Feel free to include questions with your documentation—your teacher is eager to help.

If you have any questions about what to send or how to send it, please refer to your parent handbook and your teacher's welcome letter. Your teacher will respond to your submission of student work with detailed comments and individualized guidance. In the meantime, proceed to lesson 3 and continue your work.

Learning Assessment

These assessment rubrics are intended to help track student progress throughout the year. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time. Parents and teachers can use this space to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

Learning Assessment

ENGLISH	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Alphabetizes a list of words				
Identifies abstract nouns				
Identifies collective nouns				
Uses common and proper nouns in singular, plural, and possessive forms				
Uses pronouns in singular, plural, and possessive forms				
Composes original sentences to demonstrate grammar concepts				
Uses vocabulary words in sentences that convey the word meaning				
Identifies subjects and predicates in sentences				
Uses a variety of sentences in writing				
Composes paragraphs with topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences				
Uses paragraphs to organize ideas into topics				

LITERATURE	In Progress	Completed	Notes
<i>Maroo of the Winter Caves</i>			
Free-choice book:			
Free-choice book:			

SPELLING QUIZ	Score # Correct/Total #	Notes
2		

Lesson

6

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Congratulations! You have learned 40 new vocabulary words so far this year! That's a lot of words. This week, rather than starting a new list of words, you'll spend some time going over the words that you have covered in the last five lessons. While it is tempting to keep moving forward and to keep learning new words, review is an important part of learning. By going back and revisiting the words you have already studied, you can identify the words that gave you trouble and have another chance to learn them.

Reading

Finish reading *The Golden Bull*.

Read Direct Quotations in the English manual.

Assignments

1. Look over the words from the last five lessons (found below), and cross out the ones that you know really well. These are words that you could define, use in a sentence, and spell easily. Once you have crossed these words out, circle the ones that are left. These are the ones you will review this week. Ideally, there will be about 10 to 12 words for you to study. If there are a lot more than that, you can choose whether you would like to review all of them or if you would like to limit it to the ones that are most challenging.

Vocabulary Words from Lessons 1–5

ancestors

arid

bola

cuneiform

archaeologist

attributes

code

descendants

archaeology

bas-relief

constellation

dowel

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Finish reading *The Golden Bull*.
- Read Direct Quotations.
- Review vocabulary words and choose two activities.
- Take a spelling quiz.
- Identify examples of direct and indirect quotations.
- Compose a descriptive paragraph.
- Reflect on your progress as a writer.
- Answer questions about the plot and characters in *The Golden Bull*.

drought	mammoth	plague	sarcophagus
famine	migrate	plains	scarab
filigree	mummy	prehistoric	spear
foreigners	Nile	prophet	sphinx
hieroglyphics	nomads	pyramid	thong
ibis	papyrus	reverence	wedge
javelin	pharaoh	Rosetta Stone	zodiac

Once you have created your review list of words, choose **two** of the following activities to complete this week.

- Mix and Match:** Write the vocabulary words on a set of index cards and the corresponding definitions on a separate set of cards. Put the word cards on the table in a row, face up. Put the definition cards in a pile, face down. Draw one definition card at a time and match it to a word card. Mix up the cards and then try to match the word to its definition. You can play this game with a partner and take turns.
- Flash Cards:** Write the vocabulary word on one side of an index card and the definition on the other side. Test yourself by reading the definition and guessing the correct word. See if you can spell the word correctly before you flip the card over to look at the word.
- Crossword Puzzle:** Make a crossword puzzle with your words. You can use graph paper to make this easier. Find a way to cross each word with another, and then come up with clues that provide the definition of the word. (If you don't know how to number the clues, have a parent show you or look at a crossword puzzle in the newspaper to see how it's done.) Give a blank version of your puzzle to a sibling or a parent and see if they can fill in the words.
- Create a Test:** Write fill-in-the-blank sentences for each vocabulary word, putting a blank where the word belongs. Feel free to write funny sentences that include the names of your family members, friends, pets, local landmarks, favorite hobbies, etc. Write the list of vocabulary words above or next to the sentences. Have a parent, a sibling, or a friend see if they can choose the correct words to fill in the blanks. If they have trouble, you can give additional clues to help them.
- Story Time:** Write a story that uses all of the review words in context. In order for the words to work in context, you may have to choose ancient times as the setting of your story. When you are through, rewrite the story leaving blank spaces where the vocabulary words should go. Give your list of words to a parent, a sibling, or a friend, and see if they can fill in the blanks based on the clues you've provided.
- Charades:** Play charades with your vocabulary words. Charades is a game where you act out a word or a phrase, and try to get other people to guess what it is. You are not allowed to speak, so you have to act out your word using body movements and hand gestures.

- g. **Picture This:** Draw a picture or sketch several scenes that show as many words as possible. Give your list of words to a parent, a sibling, or a friend and see if they can find the words in the picture.
- h. **Words in the World:** Write your vocabulary words, without using pencil or paper, from materials you find in your everyday life. For example, you might write a word with spaghetti noodles at dinner, on the steamed up mirror in the bathroom, or in the dirt using sticks or pebbles or acorns. Or you might make letters out of bread dough and bake them, then make words, or you could place dough letters on a baking sheet, just barely touching, and bake entire words. Getting all of your senses involved is a really great study trick! It might be fun to post a list of your words on the refrigerator and challenge family members to find the words around the house and yard. Each time a word is found, it gets crossed off the list. You can spread this activity throughout the week, forming two or three words per day for others to find.
2. At the end of the week, take a spelling quiz of the review words you worked on this week.
 3. Find examples of direct and indirect quotations from a book you are reading. If you can't find any indirect quotations, compose two indirect quotations based on a book you are reading.
 4. Write a descriptive paragraph about something you love to do. Use a variety of sentence types and structures, plus plenty of adjectives and adverbs, to create a vivid, expressive piece of writing.

At this point, you should be making the steps of the writing process part of your regular routine. In all your subjects, revise, edit, and proofread your stories and essays carefully. Take special notice of correct paragraphing, punctuation, capitalization, and use of words. Do your ideas flow well when you read your work aloud and really listen to it? Keep these steps of the writing process in mind:

- **Revise** for clarity and flow
 - **Edit** to correct mistakes
 - **Proofread** the final version to make sure it is free of errors
5. Take a few minutes to reflect on your writing with this exercise. Pretend there is a line on the floor or the ground that is about ten feet long. One end of the line indicates Strongly Agree and the other end of the line indicates Strongly Disagree, with Agree, Neutral, and Disagree in the middle, like this:



You can actually make little signs to put along your line if you'd like.

Now, think about the following questions, really considering each one before you answer it.

a. I can express myself clearly in writing.



b. I like the creative process of writing stories.



c. I enjoy doing research and writing about what I've learned.



d. Following the writing process of revising, editing, and proofreading helps me make my writing stronger.



e. I'm good at finding and correcting my mistakes during the editing and proofreading processes.



f. I feel like I'm a better writer than I was at the beginning of the year.



After considering each question, stand along the line in the spot that best describes your feelings. Be honest in your answers—you won't be graded on what your answers are. This is just an exercise to help you recognize ways in which you are improving as a writer.

Afterward, write one or two sentences reflecting on the experience. Make sure to note on the lines above what your responses were for each statement—you'll be doing this again later in the year and you'll want to compare your answers then and now.

6. Once you have completed *The Golden Bull*, answer the following questions.

- Describe how the relationship between Jomar and Zefa evolves over the course of the book.
- What role does music (and musical instruments) play in the story?

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Please submit your student's work to your Oak Meadow teacher at the end of this lesson. Make sure all the assignments are completed (you can use the assignment checklist to help you organize your submission). Contact your teacher if you have any questions.

Learning Assessment

Use assessment rubrics to track student progress and to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

ENGLISH	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Punctuates direct quotations correctly				
Differentiates between direct and indirect quotations				
Demonstrates descriptive writing				
Reflects on the learning process				
Alphabetizes a list of words				
Composes original sentences to demonstrate grammar concepts				
Uses vocabulary words in sentences that convey the word meaning				
Uses a variety of sentences in writing				
Identifies key ideas and demonstrates good note-taking skills				
Uses notes to create a detailed outline				
Cites sources using MLA citation format				
Composes paragraphs with topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences				
Uses paragraphs to organize ideas into topics				
Revises, edits, and proofreads work				

LITERATURE	In Progress	Completed	Notes
<i>The Golden Bull</i>			
Free-choice book:			
Free-choice book:			

SPELLING QUIZ	Score # Correct/Total #	Notes
6		

Lesson

17

Compound and Complex Sentences

Reading

Finish reading *The Eagle of the Ninth*.

Assignments

1. After alphabetizing and defining the following words, use them to demonstrate the four types of sentences (declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory).

sect	womb	preach
denomination	resurrect	disciple
blasphemy	sermon	

2. Work with the vocabulary list all week. Add any spelling words that continue to give you difficulty. At the end of the week, take a spelling quiz.
3. Write examples of the following:
 - a. Simple sentence with a compound subject
 - b. Simple sentence with a compound predicate
 - c. Compound sentence
 - d. Complex sentence
4. Explain the difference between a coordinating conjunction and a subordinating conjunction and give an example of each. Make sure to use your own words. (For an extra challenge, try to craft your explanation to be your demonstration sentences!)

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Finish reading *The Eagle of the Ninth*.
- Define vocabulary words and use them to demonstrate the four sentence types.
- Take a spelling quiz.
- Provide examples of different sentence structures.
- Explain the difference between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
- Answer questions about the plot and characters in *The Eagle of the Ninth*.

5. Once you have completed *The Eagle of the Ninth*, answer the following questions.
 - a. Describe how the relationship between Marcus and Esca changes over time.
 - b. After learning the truth about his father's legion, why is retrieving the eagle still so important to Marcus?
 - c. What is the significance of the Senate's reward given to Marcus and Esca when they return from their journey?

Further Study

Here are some books you might like to read:

- *Tracker* by Gary Paulsen
- *Handle with Care: An Unusual Butterfly Journey* by Loree Griffin Burns
- *National Geographic Tales from Arabian Nights: Stories of Adventure, Magic, Love, and Betrayal* by Donna Jo Napoli
- *Tenggren's Golden Tales from Arabian Nights* retold by Margaret Soifer and Irwin Shapiro

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Continue to use the weekly planner, assignment checklist, and learning assessment form to help you organize your lessons and track your student's progress.

Learning Assessment

Use assessment rubrics to track student progress and to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

ENGLISH	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Demonstrates knowledge of four sentence types				
Identifies examples of compound subjects and predicates				
Identifies examples of simple, compound, and complex sentences				
Differentiates between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions				
Composes original sentences to demonstrate grammar concepts				
Uses vocabulary words in sentences that convey the word meaning				

ENGLISH <i>(continued)</i>	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Uses a variety of sentences in writing				
Identifies key ideas and demonstrates good note-taking skills				
Uses notes to create a detailed outline				
Cites sources using MLA citation format				
Composes paragraphs with topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences				
Uses paragraphs to organize ideas into topics				
Revises, edits, and proofreads work				

LITERATURE	In Progress	Completed	Notes
<i>The Eagle of the Ninth</i>			
Free-choice book:			
Free-choice book:			

SPELLING QUIZ	Score # Correct/Total #	Notes
17		

Lesson

23

Prepositions

Reading

Read Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases in the English manual.

Continue reading *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

Assignments

1. Define the following vocabulary words and use them in sentences. Remember to include the part of speech in each definition and to underline the vocabulary words in each sentence.

pillory	logic	vice
revival	slate	guild
commerce	fortress	morality

2. Work with the vocabulary words throughout the week, and then take a spelling quiz.
3. Write sentences that use the following prepositions. Underline or shade the **prepositional phrases in purple**. Remember, the prepositional phrase starts with the preposition and ends with a noun.

above about along between before

4. Fill in the blanks with the following words:
 - a. **Bring/take:** If you _____ lemons to my house, you can _____ some lemon tarts when you leave.
 - b. **Your/you're:** _____ going to be cold if you don't wear _____ hat.
 - c. **Among/between:** _____ all the trees on our property, the big tree _____ the house and the barn is the best climbing tree.

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Read Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases.
- Continue reading *The Adventures of Robin Hood*.
- Define vocabulary words and use them in sentences.
- Take a spelling quiz.
- Write sentences using prepositional phrases.
- Choose the correct word for sentences containing commonly misused words.

- d. **I/me:** Do you want to go with my brother and _____? My brother and _____ are going swimming.
- e. **It's/its:** My cat covers _____ nose with a paw whenever _____ cold outside.

Further Study

Here is a book suggestion.

- *A Time to Dance* by Padma Venkatraman

FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS

Please contact your teacher if any questions arise.

Learning Assessment

Use assessment rubrics to track student progress and to make notes about the learning the student demonstrates or skills that need work.

ENGLISH	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Identifies prepositional phrases				
Correctly uses commonly misused words				
Uses contextual details to support ideas				
Composes original sentences to demonstrate grammar concepts				
Uses vocabulary words in sentences that convey the word meaning				
Uses a variety of sentences in writing				
Identifies key ideas and demonstrates good note-taking skills				
Uses notes to create a detailed outline				
Cites sources using MLA citation format				
Composes paragraphs with topic sentences, supporting details, and concluding sentences				

ENGLISH <i>(continued)</i>	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Uses paragraphs to organize ideas into topics				
Revises, edits, and proofreads work				

LITERATURE	In Progress	Completed	Notes
<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i>			
Free-choice book:			
Free-choice book:			

SPELLING QUIZ	Score # Correct/Total #	Notes
23		



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English Manual

Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs are the words that bring writing alive. They are descriptive words that give us more information about nouns and verbs.

Adjectives describe nouns and make sentences more interesting. You can think about them as “picture words” because they describe the appearance of people and things. For instance, consider this sentence:

The cat walked down the lane.

That is a complete sentence but it doesn't paint a very complete or interesting picture. See what happens when we add some descriptive adjectives:

The yellow striped cat walked down the winding, shady lane.

Yellow, striped, winding, and shady are all adjectives that describe the nouns in the sentence. The adjectives help give a much clearer picture of what is going on in the sentence.

In addition to making sentences more interesting, adjectives can provide essential information. Perhaps you are told, “You are supposed to meet a man at the station.” This sentence doesn't give much information. Adjectives can make all the difference: “You are supposed to meet a tall, old man, who walks with a cane, at the new bus station downtown.” Now you have the information you need!

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. For instance, consider this sentence:

The cat walked down the lane.

Now, let's see how that sentence can be enhanced through the use of adverbs:

Yesterday the cat walked quickly down the lane.

Here is a list of common adverbs, separated by type:

HOW (adverbs of manner, degree, or frequency)	WHEN (adverbs of time)	WHERE (adverbs of place)
quickly	afterward	above
slowly	now	here
softly	soon	outside
almost	then	downstairs
very	yesterday	below
usually	immediately	there

Business and Personal Letters

Your address

123 Flower Street

Ojai, CA 93023

April 29, 2015

Name and address of the person to whom you are writing

Jordan Jones

123 Rosemary Lane

Brattleboro, VT 05302

Dear Jordan Jones:

This letter is to inform you that a business letter has seven parts. Please notice that it has a return address at the very top (the address of the letter writer), followed by the date the letter was written, and then the name and address of the person to whom you are writing. A business letter has a greeting (called the salutation) and a closing (usually Sincerely followed by a comma). The body of the letter (which is this part) explains the purpose of the letter and gives all the pertinent information. The last element of a business letter, which follows the closing, is the signature of the person writing the letter.

You should follow this format when writing a letter to a business person or other professional.

Sincerely,

Your signed name

When writing a personal letter, you will usually just include the date at the top and begin your letter with a greeting (such as *Dear Lisa*, or *Hi, Lisa*) followed by a comma. A colon (which looks like this:) is used after the greeting only in a business letter.

When addressing an envelope, you put your address (called the return address) in the upper left corner. The address of the person to whom you are sending the letter goes in the center of the envelope. Postage goes in the upper right corner of the envelope. An envelope is always addressed the same, regardless of whether it is for a business or personal letter.

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. Example: Today Uncle Peter and Dad went to the concert.
- Use a capital letter to begin each word in the name of a person. Example: Mother's name is Leonora Wilhelmina Collier.
- 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, American, German, Germany, English, 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.

Here's a quick list of what to capitalize:

- Names of people and pets (Michelle, Buddy, Aunt Mary, Dr. Jones, etc.)
- Place names (Golden Gate Bridge, Grand Canyon, New Zealand, etc.)
- Days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, etc.)
- Months of the year (January, February, etc.)
- Holidays (Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, etc.)
- First word in direct quotations (He asked, "Didn't you love that book?")
- Titles (*Charlotte's Web*, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere")
- Planets (Venus, Earth, etc.)

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**.

Here are two rules about when NOT to capitalize words:

- Do not capitalize any pronouns other than I, no matter what form they take (me, you, them, mine, it, theirs, etc.), unless they come at the beginning of a sentence or in a title. Example: That book is mine. It is my favorite.
- Do not capitalize words that refer to relatives if you use a possessive pronoun in front of them. Example: My uncle came over. Uncle Peter is my dad's brother.

While you are reading, try to notice when words are capitalized and see if you can figure out why. This will help you get used to the rules and learn to use them yourself.

Citing Your Source

When writing a research report, you should use at least two sources. Of course, you are welcome to use more! Sometimes you will use books, magazines, encyclopedias, newspapers, or the internet to find information. Even though doing research on the internet gives you quick access to a wide variety of sources, it's important to use print sources as well since the information in print is likely to be very carefully checked before publication, while information on the internet can be altered by anyone with computer know-how.

Finding Reputable Sources

Whether you use print or online resources when you conduct research, it is important that you use *reputable* (trustworthy or reliable) sources. Reputable sources undergo extensive review to ensure that the information they provide is accurate. Nonfiction books, encyclopedias, news magazines, professional journals, and newspapers are generally considered reputable. Reputable websites include sites that are connected to reputable print and media sources, such as *newyorktimes.com*, *nationalgeographic.com*, or *cnn.com*. In general, websites that end in *.org*, *.edu*, or *.gov* are considered reputable.

Wikipedia.com is not considered a reputable source by academic standards because anyone can go into Wikipedia and change the entries without having to prove that the information is correct. Wikipedia is a good website for getting a general overview of your topic, and Wikipedia writers often provide a list of the sources they use to write their articles. However, you should never quote directly from Wikipedia, and you should always double check anything you learn on Wikipedia with a reputable source.

Creating a Works Cited Page

Even if you don't quote directly from a source, it's important to keep a list of your sources so that you (or your readers) can go back to them later to check your facts or gain more information. These sources are listed on a works cited page that goes at the end of your paper. In sixth grade, you will begin using the citation format that you will use in high school.

Oak Meadow uses MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines for citing sources. You'll find them below. Please notice the punctuation in your citations! Commas, periods, italics, and colons are all important and part of the rules of a proper citation. These rules may seem really complicated at first, but it's a good idea to get in the habit of using the MLA format now since you'll probably have to use it in high school and all through college as well.

List everything in alphabetical order on your works cited page (alphabetized by the first word listed in each entry, with the exception of entries beginning with The, A, and An, which are alphabetized according to the second word).

To cite print sources in MLA format:

Author last name, first name. *Title*. Publishing company, year.

Using this format, here is how *Treasure Island* would be cited:

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. Dover, 1993.

You will usually find all of the information you need to cite a print source in the first few pages of a book or magazine.

When citing online sources, use this format:

Author last name, first name (if known). "Title of article." *Website*. Organization, publication date. URL

The URL is the web address, found in the bar at the top of the web browser. For instance, the URL for the Oak Meadow website is oakmeadow.com.

Sometimes it can be hard to figure out the difference between the website name and the organization, and often they are both the same. Just do your best. Usually the website name is found at the top of the page, along with the title of the webpage or article. Usually the organization name is found at the very bottom of the page, often with a copyright symbol and the date.

Here is an example:

Bradbury, Lorna. "25 Classic Novels for Teenagers". *Telegraph.co.uk*. The Telegraph, 5 Apr. 2012. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/9189047/25-classic-novels-for-teenagers.html>

To cite an online video clip (such as YouTube):

Author last name, first name (if known). "Title of article." *Website*. Organization, publication date. URL

Here is an example of what that looks like:

Schlickemeyer, Max. "The Most Astounding Fact—Neil deGrasse Tyson." *YouTube*. YouTube, 2 Mar. 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9D05ej8u-gU>

To cite a film:

Film Title. Dir. First name Last name. Perf. First name Last name. Distributor. Year of Release.

Note: *Dir.* stands for director, and *Perf.* stands for performers.

Here's an example:

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Dir. Chris Columbus. Perf. Daniel Radcliff, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, Alan Rickman, Robbie Coltraine, and Tom Felton. Warner Brothers. 2001.

Remember, all your sources, regardless of type, go on one works cited page, and are put in alphabetical order. Pay attention to the specific way punctuation is used in the examples above and follow that as closely and carefully as you can. If you are writing by hand, wherever you see italics, underline the words instead.

In-text citations

When you quote directly from a source or refer to it in a specific way, you will need to include an in-text citation as well as a full citation at the end of your paper. An in-text citation goes right into the text where the quotation appears, usually at the end of the sentence or passage.

When you quote a piece of text word for word, you will put it into quotation marks to show that it is not your own writing. You will also include the title of the book and the page number where the quotation was found. Here is one example of an in-text citation, using the rules of punctuation for direct quotations:

In *Stuart Little*, Stuart was so happy to be sailing that he “let go of the wheel for a second and did a little dance on the sloping deck” (35).

The number in parentheses shows where in the book *Stuart Little* the quotation came from. If you don't name the title of the book in your sentence, that information about the source goes into the parentheses:

It was clear that Stuart was happy to be sailing because he “let go of the wheel for a second and did a little dance on the sloping deck” (*Stuart Little* 35).

Here's another example, showing a specific idea that came from a source, this time from a website. Even though a direct quotation is not used, the source is cited as a way to provide evidence or “support” your writing:

In Canada, a new spikey-headed dinosaur has been found that is similar to another recent find that had 15 horns and spikes on its head (*news.nationalgeographic.com*).

This time the website name is in the parentheses, but there is no page number because websites don't have page numbers. Notice how the parentheses are inside the final punctuation mark for these in-text citations—this is so there is no confusion about what the page number, book title, or website name refers to.

Conjunctions

A word used to join two words, phrases, or sentences together is called a conjunction. There are different types of conjunctions. We'll focus on two kinds: coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

Coordinating conjunctions join similar parts of a sentence. They can join one word to another word, one phrase to another phrase, or one clause to another clause. There are only seven of them, and they are sometimes known as FANBOYS because of the first letter of each word:

For And Nor But Or Yet So

Here are some examples of each situation where you might use a coordinating conjunction:

Word to word: My dog is gray **and** white.

Phrase to phrase: The dog is allowed on the couch **but** not on the bed.

Clause to clause: It's my job to take the dog for a walk, **so** my sister has to feed him.

If a coordinating conjunction joins two independent clauses, it creates a compound sentence:

I take the dog to the park, **and** he runs around like crazy.

Subordinating conjunctions join two clauses together, but in doing so, they cause one to become a dependent clause. This turns the sentence into a complex sentence (a dependent clause joined to an independent clause). There are many, many subordinating conjunctions. Here are a few:

after	even though	until	while
although	if	whenever	why
because	once	where	
before	since	wherever	
even if	unless	whether	

Here is an example:

I like to walk the dog **if** it's not too cold outside.

I like to walk the dog is an independent clause; *if it's not too cold outside* is a dependent clause.

Here is another example:

Sometimes we switch jobs **because** my sister likes to walk the dog too.

Can you spot which is the independent clause and which is the dependent clause?

It might help you to remember that **coordinating** conjunctions *coordinate* equal parts of a sentence, and **subordinating** conjunctions make one part of the sentence *subordinate*, which means it is dependent on the other part of the sentence.

Contractions

Contractions help us combine two words into one. Many students have trouble remembering how contractions work. It's easy! You simply take two words, remove some letters, and put an apostrophe in place of the missing letters. Of course, this doesn't work with just any two words, so you'll have to remember when you can use it and when you can't. However, since you probably use contractions frequently in your speech, you are likely to be familiar with what will and won't work as a contraction.

Here are some examples of contractions:

do not → don't

would not → wouldn't

should not → shouldn't

cannot → can't

you will → you'll

I have → I've

they would → they'd

will not → won't

I am → I'm

you are → you're

Remember, the contraction must include the apostrophe to be correct. If you write *dont*, the word is misspelled.

Contractions are usually only used in informal writing, such as stories, dialogue, letters, etc. For more formal writing, such as essays or reports, it is best to use each word in full rather than in contracted form.

Contractions and Possessives

There is often confusion around these synonym pairs:

you're/your

it's/its

The first word in each pair is a contraction; the second word is a possessive pronoun. (Review the section on "Nouns" for more information about using an apostrophe to form a possessive.) A good way to make sure you are using the correct word is to take apart the contraction and see if the sentence still works. Here's an example:

I'm glad you're going with us.

I'm glad your going with us.

Which sentence is correct? If you take apart the contraction in the first sentence, it still makes sense:

I'm glad you are going with us.

On the other hand, the second sentence doesn't make sense because going is not something you can have or possess.

Here's another example:

The bird flapped it's wings.

The bird flapped its wings.

Which sentence is correct? Let's take apart the contraction and see if the sentence still works:

The bird flapped it is wings.

That doesn't make sense, does it? The wings belong to the bird, so the possessive pronoun *its* is the correct word in this sentence.