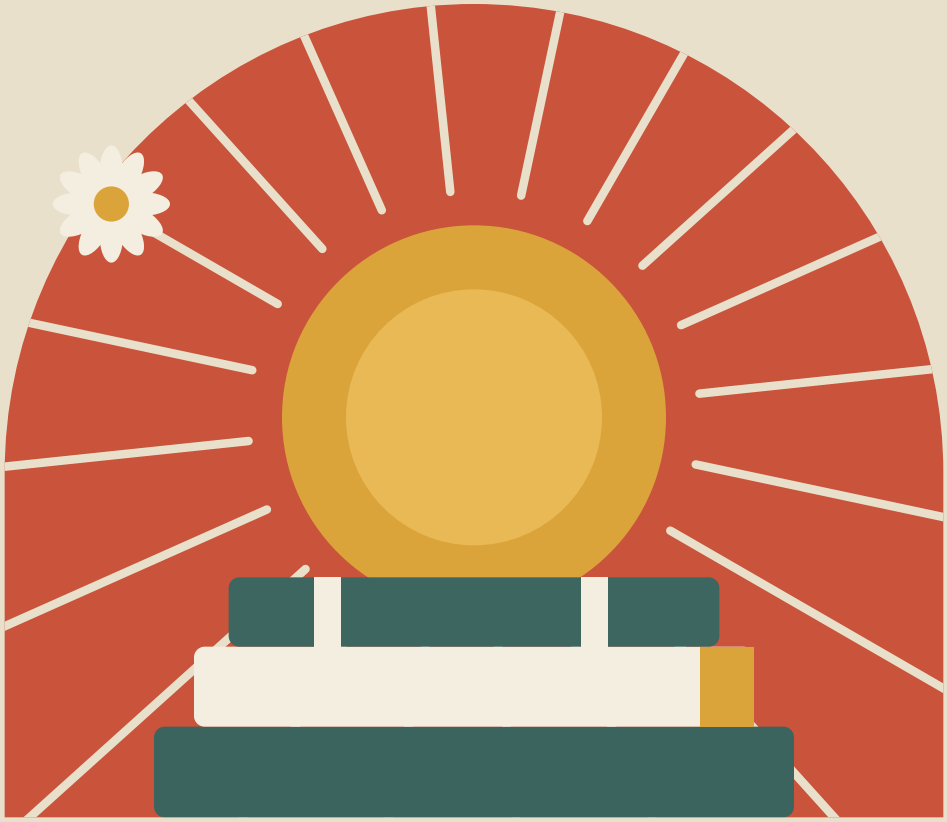
THE FOURFOLD PARENT GUIDES



English Journal
PARENT GUIDE

A Fourfold writing journal for high school

GRADES 9–12

TEACH IT WITH CONFIDENCE

BUILT ON THE FOURFOLD METHOD · GINA GLENN STEFFY

TEACHING WELL

Your First Page

A walk-through, so the first week goes smoothly.

Fill in This Course together. Name the main writing text or curriculum and the credit value.

Read the front pages. Have your student read the method pages aloud. Ask which of the four moves they usually skip.

First entry. After the first reading, your student completes Entry 1 on their own.

First check-in. Use this guide's Entry page. Ask; don't correct.

Log the hours. Start the Hours Log on day one.

> **DON'T WORRY ABOUT**
>
> *Getting through every question or every page. If your student read honestly, talked it through with you and finished one thing in their own words, it was a good week.*

YOUR YEAR WITH THE JOURNAL

The Year

A 36-week plan, one term at a time

The journal holds 26 two-page entries plus special pages. Most families do one entry a week on a draft, a revision or a model essay, and add a special page when the work calls for it. Small and finished beats large and abandoned.

Term	Focus	Pages to add
Term 1 (weeks 1–9)	Set up the Course Map and Writing Projects. One entry a week. Push Gather: audience, purpose and the words that matter.	First Writing Project; Studying a Model
Term 2 (weeks 10–18)	Push Test: is the claim clear and supported? Start the Revision Log.	Revision Log; Feedback Received
Term 3 (weeks 19–27)	Push Connect: borrow techniques from models; write across subjects.	Rhetoric & Technique; second model study
Term 4 (weeks 28–36)	Push Commit: final polished pieces and My Recurring Problems.	My Recurring Problems, Looking Back, Course Description

A NORMAL WEEK

Day	What happens
Day 1	Read or work; start Gather (terms, sources, what's unclear).
Day 2–3	Test and Connect. Ask one Common Topic question out loud.
Day 4	Commit without the book. Add terms, timeline pegs or keywords.
Friday	Ten-minute check-in: read one entry together and score it (see Grading).

WHEN YOU MISS A WEEK

Pick up where you left off. Coming back after time away is part of how memory gets stronger. Don't make up missed entries; just keep going.

Writing Skills

One skill every three weeks, practiced in the Commit step

Work on one skill at a time. When you read an entry together on Friday, look for that skill first, then use the Rule of One: one thing done well, one thing to try next time.

Weeks	Skill	What to look for
Weeks 1–3	Writing in your own words	Commit is written without the book. Check that it doesn't echo the source.
Weeks 4–6	Precise words	Replace vague words ("stuff," "good," "a lot") with exact terms from the subject.
Weeks 7–9	Using evidence	Every claim gets one specific detail, with page, date or source.
Weeks 10–12	Explaining evidence	After each detail, one sentence that begins "This shows..."
Weeks 13–15	Cause and effect	Use "because" and "as a result" to link ideas.
Weeks 16–18	Comparing	"Both ___, but ___" in at least one entry a week.
Weeks 19–21	Writing a claim	Commit opens with an arguable sentence, not a summary.
Weeks 22–24	Answering the other side	State the strongest objection fairly, then answer it.
Weeks 25–27	Paragraph structure	Claim, evidence, reasoning, closing: one paragraph per entry.
Weeks 28–30	Strong verbs and clear sentences	Cut "there is" and "it is"; one idea per sentence.
Weeks 31–33	Revising	Rewrite one old entry and note what improved.
Weeks 34–36	Looking back	Write how your thinking changed this year, with two entries as evidence.

A MODEL TO SHOW YOUR STUDENT

Sample Entry

Sample entry: a persuasive essay draft

Show this to your student once, early in the year, so they see what all four moves look like together. Then put it away; their entries should sound like them, not like this.

1 GATHER

Audience is co-op parents who already worry about screens. Purpose: persuade them to delay smartphones until 14. I defined 'smartphone' so no one thinks I mean a flip phone.

2 TEST

My claim got buried in paragraph 3. My sister read it as anti-technology. The strongest objection: kids need phones for safety. My answer: a basic phone covers safety.

3 CONNECT

I'm borrowing Lincoln's three-part ending from the Gettysburg Address, and the sleep statistics from my health unit.

4 COMMIT

Revision moved my best evidence up front and cut a paragraph. My claim in one breath: delay the smartphone, not the phone.