THE FOURFOLD PARENT GUIDES



Recipe to Write

PARENT GUIDE

Cook it, write it, test it on someone

GRADES K–12 · ALL FIVE LEVELS

TEACH IT WITH CONFIDENCE

BUILT ON THE FOURFOLD METHOD · GINA GLENN STEFFY

START HERE

How a Unit Runs

One unit a week is comfortable. Six units make a term.

Day	What happens	Your job
Day 1	Read the unit opener. Cook the recipe exactly as written.	Shop, supervise the stove, let your child do the bowl work.
Day 2	Science page: predict, then test. History page: find out.	Ask for the prediction before the test. Don't predict out loud yourself.
Day 3	Reading: choose one book. The old version: find the pre-1900 recipe.	Help find the book and the old recipe online.
Day 4	Write It, then My Recipe. Fold It In.	Use this guide's Fold It In questions. Don't correct the writing.
Day 5	Test It On Someone. Revise.	Find a tester. Stay silent while they cook.

THE SIX UNITS AND WHAT THEY TEACH

Unit	Recipe	Writing skill	Levels
1	Pancakes	Audience: writing for someone who has never done this	All five
2	Drop Cookies	Precision: change one thing at a time	All five
3	Cornbread	Persuasion: argue for a position	All five
4	Gingerbread	Adapting: rewriting an old recipe so it works	3–4 to HS
5	Bread	Process: explaining change you cannot see	3–4 to HS
6	Soup	Sensory writing: and the limits of instruction	All five

K–2 DOES FOUR UNITS

The K–2 book covers Pancakes, Drop Cookies, Cornbread and Soup. Gingerbread and Bread start at Grades 3–4.

TEACHING WELL

Responding to Your Child's Writing

Be a reader, not an editor.

The book asks one hard thing of you: don't correct the recipe. Your correction teaches your child that writing is something an adult fixes. A tester's confusion teaches them that writing is something a reader uses.

Instead of...	Try...
"You forgot to say how hot."	"Let's see if Grandpa can make it from this."
"That's spelled wrong."	Leave spelling for a separate time. This curriculum is about clarity.
"This part is confusing."	"Read me this part as if I've never cooked."
Fixing it yourself	Being the test subject: do exactly what it says, and let the result speak.
"Good job!"	"The tester didn't stop once at step 3. That sentence works."

THE RULE OF ONE

After testing, help your child choose one thing to fix first. Not five. One clear fix per round is how careful writers are made.

> **KITCHEN SAFETY**
>
> *Read your child's Kitchen Safety page together before Unit 1 and fill in Our Kitchen. An adult works the stove and oven every time. Every recipe contains wheat, and most contain dairy and egg, so plan substitutions before cook day.*

Unit 1: Pancakes

Writing for someone who has never done this

Makes 8 to 10 · Stovetop, medium · About 20 minutes · Adult works the stove; child does everything in the bowl

BEFORE YOU START

- [ ] Flour, baking powder, sugar, salt, milk, 1 egg, butter.
- [ ] Two bowls, a whisk, a ¼-cup measure, a skillet, a spatula.
- [ ] For Science (5–6 and up): baking soda and vinegar for the extra test batches.
- [ ] Read your level's For the Teaching Parent page.
- [ ] Ask about allergies before you shop.

> **OPEN WITH (READ ALOUD)**
>
> *Today you're going to cook pancakes exactly as the book says. Then you're going to write them down so well that someone who has never cooked could make them without asking you a single question.*

COOK DAY

1. Follow the recipe exactly the first time. No changes, even good ones.
2. Show how to spoon flour into the cup and level it. Scooping packs in too much and is the most common reason baking goes wrong.
3. Point out the order: wet into dry, stir just until no flour shows. Lumps are fine.
4. Let your child watch for bubbles and dry edges to know when to flip. Don't call it for them.

SCIENCE AT EVERY LEVEL

K–2 **Bubbles.** Put a little baking powder in warm water. Watch it fizz.

3–4 **Why Bubbles Mean It Is Working.** Put ½ teaspoon of baking powder in a cup of warm water. Watch what happens. Draw it.

5–6 **Two Ways to Make Gas.** Make three small batches: one with baking powder, one with baking soda alone, one with baking soda plus a tablespoon of vinegar. Cook one pancake from each.

7–9 **Gelatinization, Coagulation, and Browning.** Cook pancakes at three pan temperatures, measured if you can. Record surface colour and internal doneness for each.

HS **Reading the Chemistry Literature.** Find one peer-reviewed or extension-published source on batter rheology or Maillard chemistry. Read the method rather than the abstract.

READING: ONE BOOK PER LEVEL (YOUR CHILD CHOOSES ONE)

K–2 Pancakes, Pancakes! — Eric Carle; If You Give a Pig a Pancake — Laura Numeroff; Curious George Makes Pancakes — Margret and H. A. Rey.

3–4 If You Give a Pig a Pancake — Laura Numeroff; Pancakes, Pancakes! — Eric Carle; Curious George Makes Pancakes — Margret and H. A. Rey; Mama Panya's Pancakes — Mary and Rich Chamberlin.

5–6 Farmer Boy — Laura Ingalls Wilder; Homer Price — Robert McCloskey; Understood Betsy — Dorothy Canfield Fisher; The Cricket in Times Square — George Selden.

7–9 Farmer Boy — Laura Ingalls Wilder; Little Britches — Ralph Moody; My Ántonia — Willa Cather; Cheaper by the Dozen — Frank Gilbreth and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey.

HS The Supper of the Lamb — Robert Farrar Capon; Home Cooking — Laurie Colwin; An Everlasting Meal — Tamar Adler; My Ántonia — Willa Cather.

Read anything before your child does. Titles vary in difficulty and subject matter.

Unit 1: Pancakes

Science talk, history and the writing task

ASK ABOUT THE SCIENCE

1. Before you test it: what do you predict will happen? Write it down.
2. Which batch rose most? Why, using the words acid and base?
3. What evidence would prove your prediction wrong?

Listen for: A prediction made before the test, and an explanation that uses the gas (carbon dioxide) to explain the rise.

HISTORY AT EVERY LEVEL

K–2 **Very Old Food.** Ask a grown-up how their family made pancakes.

3–4 **People Have Cooked on Hot Stones for a Very Long Time.** Find out what a griddle is and what it was made of two hundred years ago.

5–6 **Wheat Was Expensive.** What grain grew best where you live? Find out what people there ate a hundred and fifty years ago.

7–9 **What Regional Food Actually Means.** Research what your region grew in 1850 and what people consequently ate.

HS **Diet, Milling, and Public Health.** Research the history of flour enrichment in one country and evaluate its outcomes.

WRITE IT: EVERY LEVEL'S TASK

K–2 **What Came First?** Draw three pictures: what we did first, next, and last. Then say the words out loud while a grown-up writes them.

3–4 **First, Next, Then, Last.** Write the pancake recipe in your own words, in order, using first, next, then, and last at least once each.

5–6 **Who Are You Writing For?** Write the pancake recipe twice: once for someone in your house, once for a stranger who has never cooked. Underline every sentence that had to change.

7–9 **Writing From a Plate.** Write 300 to 500 words about one specific meal you remember. No general statements about family or comfort — only what you actually saw, smelled, and heard.

HS **Reading Like a Writer.** Analyse one published piece of food writing structurally. Then write your own 800 words using one technique from it, and identify the technique.

Unit 1: Pancakes

Testing, strong writing and the check-in

TEST IT ON SOMEONE

Choose a tester who rarely cooks. Watch the moment they reach "heat the pan": most first drafts never say how hot.

WHAT STRONG WRITING SOUNDS LIKE

3–4 *"First, put the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in a big bowl and whisk them. Next, crack the egg into a different bowl and beat it. Then add the milk and the melted butter. Last, pour the wet bowl into the dry bowl and stir until you can't see any white flour."*

5–6 *"Heat a frying pan on the stove at medium. (On our stove that's the 5.) Wait until a drop of water sizzles and disappears. If it just sits there, the pan isn't hot enough yet."*

FOLD IT IN: YOUR CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

1. **GATHER** What did you need before you started, and what did you already know about pancakes?
2. **MEASURE** Which sentence in your recipe would a stranger get stuck on?
3. **FOLD IN** Where else does the order of steps matter: getting dressed, a science experiment, a game?
4. **SERVE** Read your recipe aloud to me as if I've never been in a kitchen.

> **WATCH FOR**
>
> *"Mix it up" and "cook until done." Ask "Mix what, in what, until when?" and "Done how? What would I see?"*

THE HARD PART, BY LEVEL (FROM YOUR CHILD'S BOOK)

K–2 Standing back far enough that the child does the pouring. It will be uneven. Uneven pancakes are not a problem and a child who was not allowed to pour has not cooked.

3–4 Not correcting the recipe they write. You will read it and see three things missing and want to fix them. Do not. Hand it to a real person and let the gaps announce themselves. Your correction teaches them you are the authority; the failed pancake teaches them precision.

5–6 Being the test subject rather than the editor. When their recipe says heat the pan, heat it to whatever you like and let the result speak.

7–9 This unit asks for a personal essay about a remembered meal, and it may be about you. Read it as a reader. Do not correct their memory of an event even if you remember it differently, and do not treat their version as an accusation.

HS Reading their work as a reader rather than as the person who assigned it. A reader says where they lost interest. A teacher says what was wrong. The first is more useful and much harder to give.