

Middle School Composition Course 2023-24

Amy Ruff's Homeschool Tutorials

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(919) 219-4338

Prospectus: Allow me to begin this prospectus with two testimonials from past MS Comp classes. I think they will portray to you my heart, which is to lead children to love writing & to enable them to hone their writing skills:

I feel compelled to tell you the influence Amy has had on Bobbie. Missy, Bobbie's cat, was killed last week. It has been very difficult for her & all of us. My heart aches for the loss that Bobbie has suffered—you're wondering what this has to do with Amy. Well, last year in writing class, Amy assigned a characterization paper. Bobbie chose her cat as the subject. I ran across it yesterday & read it. Needless to say, the tears were streaming as I read this beautiful tribute to a beloved pet. Little did Bobbie know at the time, she would lose her cat. I could not have taught Bobbie how to express herself the way Amy has.... So, Amy, I thank you so much for the gift you have given us. ~ Former Comp mom

Another testimony is **in my own words:** *A boy in my first Comp class (back in 2002) wrote a BCS = Biographical Character Sketch to honor his grandpa who had died a slow death from diabetes after a long life amidst his loving family. After the grandpa's death, the student gave his written tribute to his grandma for Christmas. She had cared for the ailing grandpa over many years & was deeply blessed by her grandson's priceless gift.*

To create a balanced writing experience, my Composition centers around **3 ingredients:**

- **Grammar**
 - **Punctuation**
 - **Style**
- Knowing learning styles & development differ for each student, I **gently weave 3 other ingredients** into Comp via my **peppy & personalized feedback/editing** on each student's writing, boosting skills in the following areas:
- **Spelling**
 - **Handwriting**
 - **Vocab**

Composition's Writing-Grammar-Style Objectives:

I. Writing

A. Fall Writing HW = Homework

1. **WPs = Writing Prompts** inspire creative fiction!
2. **JE = Journal Entries** encourage fiction & nonfiction reflection!
3. **FHVs = Family History Vignettes** blend creative nonfiction & exposition!

B. **BCS = Biographical Character Sketch** transitions students across a creative-expository **bridge** that leads into our winter/spring writing!

C. Winter/Spring Writing HW

1. Occasional creative **WPs**
2. A few further reflective **JEs**
3. **ERP = Expository Research Paper** empowers research that delves into a topic of interest to the student!

II. Year-Long Grammar & Style

A. **BGP = Straus's Blue Book of Grammar & Punctuation 11th edition** is emailed to students as **PDF**.


B. **EOS = Strunk & White's Elements of Style** is purchased by students in the **4th edition** preferably.

C. DS = Diagramming sentences is taught by Mrs. Ruff in logical layers with sensible labels.

Class Time/Location/Dates:

- Comp is **Tues 1-145 PM 8/22/23-12/12/23 & 1/9/24-5/14/24** with **10/10/23 fall break & 3/12/24 spring break**.
- Comp is at **Grace Church in room #118:** 200 Sage Rd, Chapel Hill, across from Lowe's & just off 15-501/I-40.

Materials: Registered students should ***purchase or *print the following**.

1. ***Journal** in a style the student likes & is comfortable submitting to Mrs. Ruff for grading
2. ***Three-ring binder** with loose-leaf paper for taking class notes, organizing sections, & storing handouts
3. ***EOS = Elements of Style** →  Strunk & White in the **4th edition** preferably (ISBN 0 205 30902 X)
4. ***BGP PDF = Blue Book of** **Grammar & Punctuation 11th Edition** by Straus **is sent to students as a PDF**.

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Writing Scope & Goals:

1. The **Writing Category** blends **creativity & exposition** throughout the year, emphasizing the creativity in the fall & exposition in the spring. During the **fall's creative adventure**, the student will spin stories in response to a variety of **Writing Prompts = WPs**; pen **Journal Entries = JEs** on various topics of personal **reflection, observation, meditation**; & write **Family History Vignettes = FHVs**.
2. As a **bridge** from the creative fall to the expository winter/spring, students will enjoy writing a **Biographical Character Sketch = BCS**. This creative exposition is based on specific structural guidelines, but the **BCS** definitely allows much latitude for expressive flair.
3. The **late winter/spring writing** primarily focuses on an **Expository Research Paper = ERP** for which the student will learn a very clear notecard-research method & a detailed-paper structure. The student will research/expose a **topic of personal interest**.

Grammar & Style Content:

1. We'll study the comprehensive, concise **grammar, punctuation, & capitalization** rules in Straus's **11th ed Blue Book of Grammar & Punctuation**—**PDF of BGP emailed to students**—with its clear explanations & enlightening examples.
2. **Hands-on, grammar-labeled diagramming of sentences** enables students to **visualize grammar & kinesthetically experience it**. Because we practice sentences together **on the board during class**, our diagramming is very **auditory**. Our **sentences** for diagramming include **some from *Elements of Style* & others from student writing**.
3. Composition exposes students to Mr. Strunk & Mr. **E.B. White** (as in *Charlotte's Web*). Their pithy guide, *Elements of Style* **4th edition**, has been a **bedrock for my writing & editing**. Instead of counting sheep at night, I fall asleep chanting their mantra: "Omit needless words." *EOS* is an invaluable tool for any writer—young or old!

Student Age & Course Unit Value: Recommended student age ranges from advanced 6th to 10th grade. For 9th or 10th graders, high school English language or elective = $\frac{3}{4}$ unit because must supplement with some literary studies to = 1 unit.

Bio: Amy Ruff lives next to her **beloved alma mater, Duke University**, & enjoys teaching, tutoring, & test prepping students **in person** as well as **online** in her areas of specialty: **SAT, ACT, & APs (AP Eng Lang & Lit, AP Hx, AP Psych)**; **literary analysis; writing & composition; Spanish; psychology; philosophy & religion; executive-functioning & study skills**.

Having completed her **BA at Duke University with double majors in English & religion**, Amy also earned a **Certificate in Duke's rigorous interdisciplinary Women's Studies Program**. While an undergraduate & after graduation, Amy worked in **editing for the Duke University Press** & continues to **freelance edit**.

Intuitive and seasoned at identifying & developing the potential in her students, Amy's **energetic & engaging style** enables students to **grow in their knowledge of subject matter** while also **honing their critical-thinking skills & elevating their character**. Having **homeschooled her own children** through high school, Amy continues to **support the homeschooling community by offering group-class tutorials**.

Counseling students to **align self-understanding with their envisioned future**, Amy has aided many to **make wise choices** for their **post-high-school paths**. She has assisted students to **succeed on test prep & applications for acceptance** into a range of schools. From **Harvard, Duke, & Stanford** to **UNC & NCSU** to **community colleges across NC**, Amy's students **thrive in diverse academic, artistic, athletic, trade, & professional pursuits**.

Of **Argentine-Italian descent** & hailing from **Italian roots in Pittsburgh, PA**, Amy attended boarding prep school on a **full scholarship** & received a **college scholarship from the Spanish National Honor Society**. Amy continued her **Spanish studies at Duke** & served on **short-term missions as a Spanish interpreter**. From the **rudiments of grammar & vocabulary** to encounters with **cooking & dancing**, Sra. Amy's students **learn to love Latina language & culture!**

Always eager to serve the local & global community, Amy is a supporter of two **overseas NGOs**, grad of **REI (Racial Equity Institute) training**, & volunteer with **The Honor Foundation** (helping special-ops retirees, like Amy's deceased big brother who was a decorated Navy SEAL).

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Registration & Tuition:

1. The nonrefundable **\$100 registration & \$750 tuition** should be paid via the following preferred **platforms**. The **registration** is due no later than **June**. The **\$750 tuition** is due as $\frac{1}{2}$ in **June** & $\frac{1}{2}$ in **January**.

- **Venmo** [www.venmo.com/Amy-Ruff-8](https://venmo.com/Amy-Ruff-8)
- **Zelle** under Amy's cell 919-219-4338
- **CashApp** [https://cash.app/\\$AmyRT3](https://cash.app/$AmyRT3)
- **Snail mail a check to** amy.ruff@outlook.com 1101 Anderson Street Durham NC 27705

2. With **payment**, please **include pertinent details** as below: **name(s), age/grade, class(es), contact info**.

Names: Student's _____ Parents' _____

Address: _____

Grade ____ Age ____ Emails: _____

Phones: Student's _____ Parents' _____

Middle School Composition on Tues at Grace Church 1-145 PM

One Track **Reg/Tuition** \$100/750

American Lit Tues 1045 AM-12 PM Regular Track \$75/700 Honors Track \$100/750 AP \$125/800

Introduction to Psychology Tues at Grace Church 930-1045 AM

Honors Track \$100/750 AP \$125/800

Introduction to Literature Tues at Grace Church 145-245 PM

Regular Track \$75/700 Honors Track \$100/750

Spanish I Registration/Tuition Tues at Grace Church 12-1 PM

Regular Track \$75/700
 Honors Track \$100/750

Spanish II Registration/Tuition Tues at Grace Church 830-930 AM

Regular Track \$75/700
 Honors Track \$100/750

Times for Amy's 2023-24 Classes on Tues – Hybrid offerings of each class are conducted in person & via Zoom (student preference):

- Tues/830-930 **Spanish II** (regular & honors tracks)
- Tues/930-1045 **Psychology** (honors & AP tracks)
- Tues/1045-12 **American Lit** (regular, honors, & AP tracks)
- Tues/12-1 **Spanish I** (regular & honors tracks)
- Tues/1-145 **Middle School Composition**
- Tues/145-245 **Intro Lit** (regular & honors tracks)

Academic Calendar for Amy Ruff's 2023-24 Classes:

- **8/22/23** First Fall Tues 2023 Class
- **10/10/23** NO Class for Fall Break
- **12/12/23** Last 2023 Tues Class
- **1/9/24** First 2024 Tues Class
- **3/12/24** NO Class for Spring Break
- **5/14/24** Last 2024 Tues Class