

# Classic Copywork & Dictation Quotes

Homeschooling Downunder

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## WHY DICTATION IS BETTER THAN SPELLING LISTS

Well-chosen passages expose children to good literature and a variety of writing styles that help them recognise and use well-structured sentences, good grammar and correct punctuation.

Dictation can be used in the homeschool to assess how your homeschool student is progressing in spelling, punctuation, handwriting and comprehension. A natural start to teaching dictation begins with copy work.

The dictation method that Charlotte Mason suggests is not what most of us would remember from school. A great emphasis is placed on preparing the dictation passage before they are required to write it. This can be done using copy work, word study and careful examination of the piece to be written (more on this later). The goal is to get it right the first time.

Charlotte Mason and Ruth Beechick suggest starting dictation during the primary education years.

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### Preparing the dictation lesson

1. Select the passage for dictation.
2. Begin each lesson with a reading of the passage. Check for comprehension.
3. Prepare the passage including word study and individual spelling preparation, vocabulary words and copy work.
4. Use the passage as a springboard for further language arts study if desired.
5. Finish with the final dictation.
6. Mark the dictation.

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### Spelling

Spelling is automatically taught when teaching dictation. When children are beginning to write they are tackling many language skills at the same time.

**"A good time to tackle spelling hard is around fourth grade reading level when children are reading fluently and have built a good visual foundation for how words should look. In the meantime, teach bits of spelling as they fit into daily writing." Ruth Beechick.**

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## Punctuation

When preparing the dictation passage, examine the punctuation used and ask your students questions about specific punctuation marks. Have them read the passage aloud, paying attention to pauses when the punctuation indicates. Remind them that they need to study not only the spelling of words, but also the punctuation used.

## Grammar

Grammar is the way we describe our language. It is talking with rules. It gives us the infrastructure for creative writing and for learning a second language. To teach grammar in the context of high quality literature is an effective way of approaching this topic.

An essential in teaching this area is a good grammar reference.

***“Students who are good writers can learn grammar better than students who are poor writers. Grammar is not the way to good writing; it is a tool that good writers use to analyse writing, to justify doing something this way instead of that way, and so forth.” Ruth Beechick.***

Many intensive grammar programs exist to help consolidate this subject for older children in the high school years when they have a good understanding of English language.

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## Dictation Resources

- [Downunder Dictation and Teachers Guide](#)
- [Intermediate Language Lessons Grade 4](#)
- [Intermediate Language Lessons Grade 5](#)
- [Intermediate Language Lessons Grade 6](#)



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### WIND IN THE WILLOWS BY KENNETH GRAHAM

It's never the wrong time to call on Toad. Early or late he's always the same fellow. Always good-tempered, always glad to see you, always sorry when you go!

### "A THOUGHT" BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

It is very nice to think  
The world is full of meat and drink  
With little children saying grace  
In every Christian kind of place.

### WINNIE-THE-POOH BY A.A. MILNE

'Where should we dig the Very Deep Pit?' asked Pooh.

Piglet said that the best place would be somewhere where a Heffalump was just before he fell into it, only about a foot farther on.

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### ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND BY LEWIS CARROLL

It was pleasanter at home, when one wasn't always growing larger and smaller, and being ordered about by mice and rabbits. I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit hole – and yet – and yet – it's rather curious, you know, this sort of life. I do wonder what can have happened to me. When I used to read fairy tales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one. There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought! And when I grow up, I'll write one.

### BLACK BEAUTY BY ANNA SEWELL

#### MY EARLY HOME

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a ploughed field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a grove of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.

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### PILGRIMS PROGRESS BY JOHN BUNYAN

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and, as he read, he wept, and trembled; and, not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, *What shall I do?*

### TALES OF SHAKESPEARE BY CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

#### KING LEAR

The old king, worn out with age and the fatigues of government, he being more than fourscore years old determined to take no further part in state affairs, but to leave the management to younger strengths, that he might have time to prepare for death, which must at no long period ensue. With this intent he called his three daughters to him, to know from their own lips which of them loved him best, that he might part his kingdom among them in such proportions as their affection for him should seem to deserve.

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### CALL OF THE WILD BY JACK LONDON

It was a hard trip, with the mail behind them, and the heavy work wore them down. They were short of weight and in poor condition when they made Dawson, and should have had a ten days' or a week's rest at least. But in two days' time they dropped down the Yukon bank from the Barracks, loaded with letters for the outside. The dogs were tired, the drivers grumbling, and to make matters worse, it snowed every day. This meant a soft trail, greater friction on the runners, and heavier pulling for the dogs; yet the drivers were fair through it all, and did their best for the animals.

### LITTLE WOMEN BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

#### A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Jo was the first to wake in the grey dawn of Christmas morning. No stockings hung at the fireplace, and for a moment she felt as much disappointed as she did long ago, when a little sock fell down because it was so crammed with goodies. Then she remembered her mother's promise, and, slipping her hand under her pillow, drew out a little crimson-covered book. She knew it very well, for it was that beautiful story of the best life ever lived, and Jo felt that it was a true guide-book for any pilgrim going the long journey. She woke Meg with a 'Merry Christmas', and bade her see what was under her pillow. A green-covered book appeared with the same picture inside, and a few words written their mother, which made their one present very precious their eyes. Presently Beth and Amy woke, to rummage and find their little books also - one, dove-coloured, the other blue; and all sat looking at and talking about them, while the east grew rosy with the coming day.

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### THE THREE MUSKETEERS BY ALEXANDER DUMAS

This short interval was sufficient to determine D'Artagnan. It was one of those events which decide the life of a man. It was a choice between the king and the cardinal. The choice made, it must be persisted in. To fight was to disobey the law, to risk his head, to make at once an enemy of a minister more powerful than the king himself; all this the young man perceived, and yet, to his praise be it said, he did not hesitate a second. Turning towards Athos and his friends,

“Gentlemen,” said he, “allow me to correct your words, if you please. You said you were but three, but it appears to me we are four.”