The 3rd edition has been completely revised in the following ways:

• The lessons are in order with the Teaching Writing: Structure & Style (TWSS) Units. This provides a systematic way of building student writing skills in conjunction with TWSS.
• The source texts are 4th- to 6th-grade reading level.
• The checklists contain a basic level and a challenge level to accommodate different student skill levels.
• The Teacher’s Guides have been totally revamped to include the source texts and instruction for the parent-teacher. No more borrowing the student book to follow along!
• Third editions do not contain an independent Library Research Report assignment (Unit VIII), although the Essentials Program team encourages tutors and parents to include it as part of Essentials.

1. How are the IEW 3rd edition history-based writing lessons different from the 2nd edition?

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• Third editions do not contain an independent Library Research Report assignment (Unit VIII), although the Essentials Program team encourages tutors and parents to include it as part of Essentials.

2. Do I need to purchase the 3rd edition if I already have the 2nd edition?

Tutors will be referring to the 3rd edition in class; in addition, many of the source texts have changed in the two editions, as well as the reading level of many of the texts. Although the Essentials program team is creating a similar schedule of the 2nd edition, there will be some discrepancies in the lesson source texts and order of stylistic techniques. Parents who are comfortable using IEW should be able to manage with the 2nd edition, but a full understanding of TWSS and the IEW techniques will be necessary to accommodate classroom activity with the older edition. However, the basic skills presented in class will be the same for both editions.

3. Do I need the Teacher’s Guide?

The revised Teacher’s Guides are excellent resources for any tutor or parent in Essentials. They contain helpful tips on implementing the skills presented in class for the parent: sample Key Word Outlines (KWOs), formatting helps for papers, and even literature suggestions for students and parents that align with the time period. The appendices in the Teacher’s Guides include ideas on creating a polished draft notebook, student samples, answer keys for vocabulary quizzes, and game ideas. The Teacher’s Guides are helpful resources for a new or experienced IEW parent.
4. If I get one of IEW’s theme-based writing lessons books, do I need to purchase the teacher’s training course?

Yes, you do! IEW’s theme-based writing lessons books are meant to be supplemental—an aid to the teacher. They presume that the instructor has been through IEW’s Teaching Writing: Structure & Style course. A book can’t teach writing to a child without teacher support. After you learn IEW’s system, these books will be able to support you in teaching your child to write.

5. Is it necessary to buy the teacher training course (TWSS), or could I just buy the Student Writing Intensive?

The primary goal of Excellence in Writing is teacher training. Writing lessons and DVDs are available for the student to make the job of the teacher as easy as possible, but it is important for teachers to gain the training necessary to help their children write well.

Writing is an art and requires a give and take between student and teacher. The teacher’s course (TWSS) equips you to provide that for your student. If you only have the student DVDs, your student will learn a good deal but will only get the answers to whatever questions were asked when the course was originally filmed. If your student has any difficulty, you may find it challenging to provide him the unique help he needs. The teacher’s course provides the hows and whys behind the program so that you too can become an accomplished writing teacher over time.

One experienced homeschool mother explains, “I homeschool eight children, so I can appreciate how precious time is, but trying to teach writing without taking the time to watch my teacher’s DVDs would be like pushing the car down the highway because I didn’t have time to stop for gas! You don’t have to watch the entire teacher’s course in one sitting. Just watch a disc every month or so and you will do just fine. Better yet—call up a friend to watch them with you (one a week or one a month). The accountability will keep you going, and you’ll have some fun too. That is how I got started, and it made for great friend time in addition to my own teacher training.”

As IEW’s founder Andrew Pudewa has said, “Our materials are like ice cream—the more the better! But be sure the first serving is for the teacher.”

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