

My Homeschool

ENGLISH

Grade 3A - Semester 1



Knowledge Rich Language Arts For
Home Education

My Homeschool English 3A: Knowledge rich language arts for home education.

by Michelle Morrow and Beth Frankish

Edition 1

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Introduction

This English resource has been written to follow the Australian Curriculum V9, the NSW Syllabus English (2023). It is a simple straightforward curriculum that cuts out the busy work and gets children writing, reading and thinking.

Our knowledge rich approach is inspired by Charlotte Mason, Natalie Wexler, and E.D Hirsch. Each term focuses on a core knowledge subject. For Term One our focus is Greek myths and Term Two is birds.

In preparing this resource, we have adapted ideas from Judith Hochman and Natalie Wexler's work *The Writing Revolution*. Their book takes a sentence level approach to writing and advocates that children must be taught explicitly how to write. Along with this, *My Homeschool English 3A* draws from Nathaniel Swain's work on Story Grammar, along with the Syntax Project, which was developed to help schools teach structured literacy. Many of these resources are available for free online, but our resource has been tailored to suit teaching in a homeschool setting.

It is quite simple to teach as it requires minimal preparation and most lessons are self explanatory. **You will need to be present to start a lesson** as there is a lot of teacher/student interaction. In most cases one lesson shall represent one day's work. However, as your student's teacher you know the capabilities of your student, so you can best determine the amount of work that should be done. At times you might break the lesson down into a few days. Other times you might be able to do a few lessons in one sitting. Lessons need only take between 15 and 30 minutes.

This resource is one half year of work. It has been broken down into 18 weeks with four lessons per week. There are two 8 week sections with the 9th week used as a catch up or for a self-directed writing assignment if desired.

This book is intended for use in the first semester (Term 1 and Term 2) of Year 3/Grade 3 with a child aged 8 or 9.

Suggestions to Teachers

We have provided some teaching suggestions and useful information that will help you understand how to get the most out of this resource.

Use a Notebook

Write lessons in an exercise book. Whilst we have provided spaces for your child to fill in the blanks the spaces are only there as a visual representation to show where they need to insert their own content or for you to do the question with them orally. There is not adequate space to write in the words.

Presentation of the work is important. Instruct the student on using a margin, indentation of paragraphs and a title for the work. Encourage the student to use self editing skills and proofread their work. If they see something wrong allow them to correct it (using an eraser or liquid paper) prior to handing it over for marking.

Use the **back part of your notebook for the weekly spelling** or use a separate spelling book.

Copywork and Handwriting

A natural precursor to teaching dictation begins with copywork. Copywork is simply writing out by hand or copying from other written texts or models. This practice has been employed for centuries as a technique for teaching writing skills to young and old scholars.

Cursive handwriting is usually introduced in Grade 3.

Additional copywork is provided in your course's Virtual Cupboard.

Grammar and Punctuation

Every lesson should be a language lesson. We have aimed to teach grammar here in the context of writing. No grammar terms are given that won't be used within the student's work.

Take the opportunity to teach or reinforce certain aspects of grammar during your lessons, sprinkle in terms such as adjective, noun, pronoun and verb. Don't get too technical, you don't want to bamboozle the student.

At the beginning of Grade 3 you can reinforce beginning a sentence with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. During the year, commas, question marks and speech marks will be introduced.

When examining a passage, examine the punctuation also. Ask your student questions about specific punctuation marks. Have them read aloud the passage, paying attention to pause when the punctuation indicates. Remind them that they need to study not only the spelling of words, but also the punctuation used. The way you read a passage will help them work out the natural pauses for commas and full stops.

Keep an eye on the most common errors committed and focus on correcting those.

Weekly Spelling and Phonics

In this book we have moved beyond phonics and will be teaching word parts. Each week we will be focussing on different suffixes.

A suffix is a linguistic component that is added to the end of a word to modify its meaning or change its grammatical category. For example, in the word "happiness," the suffix "-ness" is added to the root word "happy" to form a noun meaning the state of being happy. Similarly, in the word "quickly," the suffix "-ly" is added to the adjective "quick" to turn it into an adverb.

Suffixes are one type of affix, which are morphemes (the smallest units of meaning) attached to words to create new words or alter their existing meanings.

Homophones (words that sound the same but have different spellings) and **heteronyms** (words that have the same spelling but sound different depending on the context) are also highlighted for your student to see. They do not need to focus on the spellings of these words they are just there to show the student the variation.

HOW TO STUDY THE WORD LISTS

Some lessons have a short note to help you teach the lesson however teaching the lessons is very straightforward.

Here is a general guideline for your child to study the word lists. Teach them to:

Look closely at the words to be memorised.

Say the words out loud.

Divide words into **syllables** when appropriate.

Find out the **meaning of the word** if they don't already know it.

Copy the word a minimum of three times.

ACTIVITIES

Each lesson is to be spread out over the week for 5 -10 mins a day (depending on how long the list is).

Here are some suggested activities to do during the word study time.

Day 1: Study words and copy into the spaces provided within this resource or in a separate spelling book.

Day 2: Split words into syllables. Add suffixes to the words: 'ing', 'er', 's' or 'es'. Not all words will have a suffix or plural. These can be entered into your child's spelling book.

Day 3: Prepare sentences using at least 3 words in the list.

OPTIONAL SPELLING TESTS

An optional spelling test can be completed on **Day 4** after the child has studied the words for a few days. Always correct misspelled words. Misspelled words can be added to a wordlist for revision in the following week.

ADDITIONAL DOLCH WORDS

The Dolch word list is a collection of 220 words commonly used in children's books and writings. These lists have been broken down into sections that most children have learnt by particular stages.

Read through these lists with your child and mark the ones they struggle with. Add them to your assessment week for further drill.

Even though many of these words are sight words, many can also be sounded out phonetically.

Reading, Comprehension and Vocabulary

Children are able to improve their writing by reading, however this is not the only component. Many of the observation and story lessons are starters for further writing exercises.

For a student to be able to comprehend a passage they need to have many skills cooperating to allow them to understand what they are reading. For some children this skill occurs naturally and we can 'test' it with simple oral questions or a written narration about the passage.

If you find that a student does not comprehend the passages you can look for various areas that will help you break down the process for them. Can they read the passage? If they need some help then you might try reading it with them or for them. If they cannot read it, trying to do dictation on the passage is not advisable.

Are they paying attention to the punctuation, pausing for commas or recognising a question mark?

Do they understand the vocabulary used?

The use of jargon, slang or clichés may also inhibit comprehension.

What the reader knows (prior knowledge) of the passage being discussed also helps them comprehend a passage.

Reading words in the rich context of whole books is a very effective, natural method for increasing your student's **vocabulary**. When

they find a word that they do not know, have them try to guess the meaning using the context of the extract and then either tell them the correct meaning or have them look it up in a dictionary. After they understand the meaning they can then put it into a sentence of their own either orally or written.

This is the ideal time to introduce the dictionary and alphabetical order.

Narration Lessons

The art of telling back or narration is employed in many lessons. This is an excellent skill to encourage. Fostering a keen memory and retention is a study skill that you want to develop into a life-long habit.

Composition

Some lessons give the student an opportunity to compose pieces of writing in a variety of text styles from an imaginative story to an informative text. Discuss what will be in their composition **orally first**. This oral lesson helps them to get their creative juices flowing and makes them realise that they do have something to write. If you skip this stage you will often find resistance from reluctant writers. However, many children will still find writing down their own compositions a daunting experience. This is because their vocabulary far exceeds their writing ability. Therefore, use wisdom in getting them to write their composition. Assess each child individually and have them dictate to you some compositions if necessary. In my experience this skill grows slowly and needs patience and nurturing. Some children are natural writers others take a while and at this age the skill level is quite varied. Charlotte Mason did not expect children to write out their compositions until age 10, so if they aren't ready - don't panic; there is always next year! The focus should really be on students being able to write accurate and coherent sentences.

Presentation of some of their compositions should be in a digital format in order to teach them some computer skills.

Poetry Appreciation and Memorisation

Each poetry selection should be read aloud to the student. Some poems your child may choose to memorise, this will require many readings. The content of poetry uses the imagination and speaks directly to the heart. The images in poetry are wonderful. You don't need to turn a poem inside out to appreciate it. With younger children, make it your goal to help them enjoy the poems, especially the rhythm, leaving the techniques and jargon for later years.

Pictures

Most of the pictures used in this book are copies of the works of great artists. A few questions are given with each picture, but the teacher should supplement these with many others.

Literature Discussions

A genre is the traditional classification of texts, such as fiction and non-fiction. This is the first classification your student should be able to make. You can ask them whether they think this is a true story or a pretend story.

You can begin introducing some discussion about other features of the stories and poems they are reading. Your aim here is to have your child notice and observe: why a text was written, who was it written to and what was the author trying to say. These discussions will help your child think about literature and give them some vocabulary for discussing literature in a literary way. Discussion prompts have been added to lessons.

Writing Instruction:

For years writing instruction has been based on the idea that students can learn to write 'naturally' in the same way they learn to talk. However, we know now this doesn't work for all children and with declining writing standards the need for explicit writing instruction is needed more than ever. With homeschooling this is

easier as you are teaching alongside your child. We use direct instruction in this resource.

Read Aloud:

In the **Read Aloud** sections the teacher will be expected to read the passage to the child. These texts are above grade level and are expected to challenge the student in terms of vocabulary.

Read With Me:

These are passages the student can attempt to read themselves with help from the teacher. These are aimed at boosting fluency in reading.

We have also suggested books that can accompany the knowledge units that students can read to enrich their knowledge.

If your child is still at the decoding (sounding out) stage of reading you will need to help them increase their fluency. This can be done through repeatedly reading decodable texts and passages.

Assessment & Review Weeks

Week 9 and Week 18, are assessment and review weeks. Exercises have been provided to help review the content that the students have learnt in the previous weeks. You can write the answers in this section.

Answer Key

All lessons are hopefully self-explanatory, but an answer key can be found in your Year 3 Virtual Cupboard:

Questions with answers are marked with an asterisk*.

Week One – the suffix ‘y’ and double consonants

Teacher’s Note: See the introduction for information on the weekly phonics and spelling lists.

- A suffix is an ending added to an existing word that changes its use or meaning.
- Add the suffix ‘y’ to these words.
- All the words in this list are single syllable words which have a short vowel sound and double consonants at the end.

Word	Add suffix	‘y’	Copy	Copy	Copy
<i>dust</i>	<i>dusty</i>				
<i>dirt</i>					
<i>hand</i>					
<i>rust</i>					
<i>milk</i>					
<i>silk</i>					
<i>bump</i>					
<i>jump</i>	<i>jumpy</i>				
<i>lump</i>					
<i>test</i>					
<i>mist</i>					
<i>frost</i>	<i>frosty</i>				
<i>sand</i>					
<i>moss</i>					

LESSON 1—READ ALOUD—THE BIRTH OF ZEUS

I am going to tell you the history of a wonderful people. These are the people who lived in the beautiful islands and peninsulas called Greece. They made wonderful stories, partly from old beliefs, partly from their ways of speaking of the powers of nature—sky, sun, moon, stars, and clouds—as if they were real beings, and so again of good or bad qualities of human nature, and partly from old stories about their forefathers. The Greeks were wonderful storytellers, and their way of seeing the world still has an impact on our culture today. More so than we often think!

What are myths?

If you were a child growing up in Ancient Greece what stories would you have heard? If your mother or father sat by your bedside at night, they wouldn't have told you about *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, or the story of *Cinderella*. No, instead, they would have told stories of the gods and goddesses that lived on Mount Olympus.

Even though Greece is now quite a small country, in ancient times it was a very large civilisation and one that had a significant impact on the world. That is why we are going to explore the stories of Ancient Greece. These stories, along with stories from the Bible, impacted much of the artwork, poetry and books we have seen throughout history – particularly in the Western world.

Myths are not like books where we often know who the author is. Instead, they have been passed down through word of mouth. Myths told people what to think about the gods and goddesses and made them afraid of what these supernatural beings could do if they didn't behave. This does not mean everyone believed all that was said in myths – do not think that Ancient people were not intelligent or level-headed — but these myths gave them an understanding of how life worked and the harsh realities of humanity.

The word myth comes from the word ‘mythos’ in Greece – this means story. The Greeks have another word called ‘logos’ this means word, or truth. This is the word that is at the beginning of Gospel of John in the Bible. The writer John starts by saying ‘In the beginning was the *logos*’. He is saying here that Jesus is not a myth, like you will have heard before. He’s not part of these stories about magical creatures – he is the truth. He was speaking this to people who would have heard these Greek and Roman stories – he is making sure they know this story he is about to tell them is very different!

Reading these myths can tell us what life was like in that time and what people thought. It can tell us how people did or didn’t get along with each other. It can give us a hint as to how women and children were thought of – perhaps differently as to how they’re thought of today!

These stories got mixed up with their belief and came to be part of their religion and history; and they wrote beautiful poems about them, and made lovely statues in their honour. It is thought that nobody can understand anything about art or learning without learning these stories. I must begin with trying to tell you a few of them.

The Birth of Zeus

In the first place, the Greeks thought there were twelve greater gods and goddesses who lived in Olympus. There is really a mountain called Olympus in Greece, and those who lived far from it thought it went up into the sky, and that the gods really dwelt on the top of it.

The chief god of all, the father of gods and men, was the sky-god called Zeus in Greece, or Jupiter by the Romans. Zeus was said to have a father who was called Kronos, which means ‘time’, his other name was Saturn. Perhaps you are recognising some of these names from those of our planets!

As 'time' devours his offspring, so Saturn was said to have had the bad habit of eating up his children as fast as they were born. Tired of her children being eaten his wife Rhea gave him a stone in swaddling clothes and presented it as his new son. This was enough to trick him! While Saturn was biting on his hard morsel his son Zeus was saved.

Zeus controlled the weather. It was said that from his hands came forth lightning bolts at his bidding. There were 11 more gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus, and even more that did not live there. Every river had a god and was a great god of all nature called Pan, which in Greek means 'all'. Neptune was only a visitor in Olympus, though he had a right there. His kingdom was the sea, which he ruled with his trident, and where he had a whole world of lesser gods and nymphs, tritons and sea horses, to attend upon his chariot.

As you read more of the Greek myths you will begin to understand what a cruel world it was! You will find out many of these stories are not nice stories. These gods and goddesses are often cruel, petty and caused lots of trouble!

Many of the characters in these stories were worshipped as gods and goddesses. The Ancient Greeks would make sacrifices towards them in their homes and temples. But they always wanted something in return – children, love, to win a battle, riches.

ACTIVITY 1.1

Oral:

Re-tell what you have learnt about Greek Mythology.

Written:

Finish this sentence:

Greek mythology is _____
_____.

LESSON 2—SENTENCES VS FRAGMENTS

Teacher's Note: Some of the following grammar lessons are found in Charlotte Mason's book Home Education (p. 296 – 300). Charlotte Mason believed that it was important that students learn to recognise and produce a correct sentence – modern studies agree with her.

As we are learning to write wonderful sentences one of the first things we need to do is recognise what is **not** a sentence. When we are first learning to write it is easy to write fragments, instead of sentences.

We often speak in fragments. However, when this is written down it is not a correct sentence. In poetry or lists we may write fragments, but for all other writing we must usually write proper sentences.

What is a fragment?

A fragment is a way of describing an incomplete sentence. It is a group of words that is missing either a subject or predicate. The words may make some sense, but they do not hold a complete thought.

What is a sentence?

- Every sentence speaks of **someone** or of **something** and tells us something about that of which it speaks.
- So, a sentence has two parts:
 - (1) The thing we speak of; (subject)
 - (2) What we say about it. (predicate)
- A sentence is simply words put together to make sense. It contains a subject, and predicate.

'Rice oats chair really good and cherry' is not a sentence – because it makes no sense!

'Trees and leaves' is not a sentence because it does not contain a predicate (what we say about the 'trees and leaves').

'Went over there' is not sentence because it does not have a subject. It leaves us asking, **who** or **what** went over there?

'Tom ate a sandwich.' is a sentence. It is a sentence because it **tells us something** (ate a sandwich) about **someone or something** (Tom).

'The chair is inside.' is a sentence. This is because it **tells us something** (is inside) about **something** (the chair).

Here are some more examples of sentences:

- She ran.
- It walked over there.
- Australia is a wonderful place.
- We all love ice cream.

Here are some fragments:

- jumped up and down (missing subject)
- saw a tree (missing subject)
- The Prime Minister of Australia (missing predicate)
- Greek Myths (missing predicate)

ACTIVITY 1.2*

Oral:

Read these out loud. Then, ask yourself, are they complete sentences or are they just fragments? The correct punctuation has

been deliberately left out here so as not to give away which are sentences and which are fragments.

- the two girls
- the ducks were swimming in the pond
- trees and leaves
- movie of the year
- tom sat on the chair
- on the table

Written:

Turn these fragments into correct sentences:

- a wonderful season
- the girls
- Greek myths

LESSON 3—PUNCTUATION: COMMAS – REVISION YEAR 2

ACTIVITY 1.3*

A horse can run and trot and gallop and walk.

A horse can run, trot, gallop and walk.

- How many times is **and** used in the first sentence?
- How many times is **and** used in the second sentence?
- Where are commas used in the second sentence?

Do not use and more than once in any one sentence of the following, use commas instead.

1. Write a sentence telling three things that a bird can do.
2. Write a sentence telling four things that a cat can do.
3. Write a sentence telling three things that a baby can do.
4. Write a sentence telling three things that a carpenter can do.