Classical Writing

Poetry for Beginners

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Preface

Poetry can be lofty thought or impassioned feelings expressed in imaginative words. By combining Aristotle's definition from the Poetics with his own definition of rhetoric, Lombardus defined poetics as the faculty of finding out "whatsoever is accommodated to the imitation of actions, passions, customs, in rhythmical language, for the purpose of correcting the vices of men and causing them to live good and happy lives."

> *Poetica est facultas videndi quodcunque accommodatum est ad
> imitationem cuiusque actionis, affectionis, moris, suavi sermone,
> ad vitam corrigendam & ad bene beateque vivendum comparata.*
> *~ Lombardus, Preface to Poetics (1550)*

The art of living that good and happy life begins in childhood. Children can begin to tackle the mechanics of poetry, discuss the meaning of poems, and analyze poems for their poetic, grammatical, logical, and literary content in the elementary years. With practice, they can begin to imitate poetry by writing prose versions of time-honored great poems, and ultimately they can learn to write their own poetry by applying classical poetic techniques to their own compositions.

With *Classical Writing - Poetry* students will study great poets like Stevenson, Lear, Shakespeare, Spenser, Keats, and Chaucer in the hopes that, further down their educational road, their familiarity with classical poetic structures will allow them to approach these and other great poets with increasing confidence. When they really need to dig into the great poems and literary classics, they will already be familiar with the structures and the methods of poetry and can turn their full attention to reading and understanding the longer works in the Great Books. A study through this course creates a tremendous foundation in language. The fear of Shakespeare will be gone; the familiarity with Shakespearean language will become a true aid. The student will simply read and enjoy, unhampered by the awkwardness of unfamiliar language and verse forms.

In addition to gaining the ability to analyze and imitate this kind of literature, as a secondary goal, we hope that students will develop an aesthetic appreciation for how content can be put into form, and furthermore, that they will learn to express some of their thoughts by composing simple poetic imitations of their own.

To reach these goals poetry should be studied for at least twelve weeks during each school year. This book covers the first two or three of such twelve-week studies. The intermediate and advanced volumes of this series will build directly on the skills learned in this volume.

It is near and dear to our hearts to attempt to reintroduce children to this art of crafting words into poetry. The classical principles of invention, arrangement, and style are available for us as tools to use. Poetry "fills our souls" as it will yours and your student's. It

communicates concepts and sentiments that are hard to express as persuasively or clearly or emotionally or spiritually in prose.

> *Nature with open volume stands,*
> *To spread her Maker's praise abroad;*
> *And every labour of His hands*
> *Shows something worthy of our God.*
> *I would for ever speak His name,*
> *In sounds to mortal ears unknown;*
> *With angels join to praise the Lamb,*
> *And worship at His Father's throne.*
>
> *~ Isaac Watts*

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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

*The true philosopher and the true poet are one and a beauty,
which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both.*
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Poetry is the molding and shaping of language, to create patterns, sounds, and images with words. The poet moves the minds, hearts, and souls of men in an artful manner of communication. In classical education, it is our search for truth and virtue that leads us to the study and writing of poetry. We do not know anything well until we can express it well to others. By reading and writing poetry we discover order in our seemingly chaotic world; we find that meaning and beauty, as reflections of truth and goodness, are expressed through God's gift of language.

Why Poetry?

Like many of the arts of writing, the study of poetry has been sadly neglected in modern times. Prose writing is still taught. Students are still required to express themselves coherently in grammatically correct sentences. Instruction in poetics, on the other hand, is gone, and what passes for it nowadays in today's schools does not include the craft of molding language to express virtuous and truthful thoughts and sentiments. Nowadays the poetry books available are largely dictionaries or anthologies. Few technical books dealing with the art of poetry are available for school age children. Ours is an era of postmodern subjectivity that shudders at the thought of categorizing, classifying or quantifying the elements of a work of art for fear that such analysis destroys the creativity and integrity of the poet. We believe, contrary to these modern complaints, that poetic creativity is best expressed by properly applying the techniques of classical prosody.

Classical Poetry

*Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world,
and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar.*
~ Percy Bysshe Shelley

Poetry is an art form. The classical definition of an art is that it is a conscious use of skill or technique, along with creative imagination, that results in an aesthetic product. Human art imitates the process of creation in the natural world. Creation, in this instance with a capital "C", refers to all things that the Creator, God, has made. Everything God has made is true, good, and beautiful; hence, the purpose of art is to communicate and reflect that truth, goodness, and beauty. We attempt to think God's thoughts after Him.

Men of antiquity understood from observation that Creation is rationally ordered and that it operates according to fixed laws, principles, and forms. These laws, principles, and forms are independent of their observer. They are true and eternal, a reflection of the mind of their Creator. Art in the classical sense then becomes the imitation of these persistent objective forms, focusing on what is permanent and ordered.

Classical Writing - Poetry for Beginners Preview

Aristotle in his Poetics says that the art of poetry rests on:

- a desire to imitate
- a desire for harmony

The world was created with order and harmony. Poetry seeks to restore that order and harmony to fill our souls' deepest longings for a restoration to the Creator, God, and His peace. Classical poetry, like the other arts of the ancients, looks for and imitates those harmonious forms. It concerns itself with the ideals of the Creator, with what "ought to be". Classical poetry, in its rhythms, balance, and sounds, was believed to instill moral habits and sublime states of feeling in the human soul. (See Aristotle's *Poetics* Ch. 1 lines 18–32.) In its emphasis on balance, symmetry, and integration of parts to whole, poetry reached for the perfect forms.

Poetry in its aim for truth is of course constrained by the limits of human understanding. It approaches and reaches only. Yet in its approach to truth and goodness it has a special concern for beauty (order and harmony) to guide it, and this gives poetry a higher calling than other arts. It aims to reflect those perfect forms of truth, goodness, and beauty and it reaches for an ideal, whether observed, thought or felt. Poetry lifts us up, or takes us deeper.

Poetry and Prose

The crown of literature is poetry. It is its end and aim.
It is the sublimest activity of the human mind.
It is the achievement of beauty and delicacy.
The writer of prose can only step aside when the poet passes.
~ William Somerset Maugham

Poetics in antiquity was not carefully distinguished from prose. A young Greek or Roman child's study of literature would primarily involve analyzing and imitating great poetry. Most of his analysis and imitation would be practiced on the epic poems of Homer or Virgil. To the Greeks and Romans, literature was poetry. It emphasized the identical nature of the two. Poetry is, after all, only prose with a few added restrictions: meter, rhyme, and a greater tendency to use figurative language. The distinction between poetry and prose is not always clear; the line is fluid.

Poetry, without line breaks, meter, and restrictions on sounds, easily unravels into prose. Shakespeare's monologues and dialogues have a distinct meter, but otherwise appear like prose. The methods of analysis and imitation that work on prose will also work on poetry. But these few restrictions of meter, rhyme, and figure, make all the difference. The special techniques of poetical form tie down language in order to create harmony and beauty for the human mind and ear and an appeal to the soul.

Poetry and Rhetoric

Of our conflicts with others we make rhetoric;
of our conflicts with ourselves we make poetry.
~ William Butler Yeats

Poetry is one of the oldest forms of argument. Poets exploit the sound and sense of language to their fullest potential to respond to both personal experience and the conditions of the world around them. In this program your student will become familiar with the tools

of rhetoric used by poets to construct their arguments; he will learn how poets develop forms and imagery specifically suited to their persuasive aim.

The tools of rhetoric concerned with writing are the canons of: *invention, arrangement*, and *style*. In poetry, with its careful restrictions on meter, rhyme, and figure, far more than in prose, these three canons of rhetoric are all interlinked with one another. The poet cannot truly separate arrangement from style, nor content (invention) from arrangement. For poetry, the three canons are like an interwoven three-stranded cord. You cannot unravel one canon without unraveling the others. It is for this reason that poetry is often much "tighter" than prose.

In *invention* the author "invents" the content or message of the poem. In choosing to describe or narrate he discovers the "topics" for his presentation of an event, a person, a place, a thing, or a concept. The entire canon of invention, Aristotle's topics, sorting arguments according to definition, comparison, cause, effect, etc., is available to the poet (as to the prose writer), as an aid to crafting words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

The canon of *arrangement* addresses a poem's organization, specifically the ordering of:

- stanzas
- sentences
- lines
- phrases
- words
- syllables
- letters

The poet must consider order and organization in the poem at all levels, even down to the most minute. Metrical and figural arrangement helps to optimize every last detail. Prose writing frequently shows careful arrangement at the level of the paragraph, sentence, and word. Poetry interweaves arrangement with invention down to the syllable, letter, and sound.

Invention and arrangement are interwoven just as carefully with the chosen *style* of the poem:

- low, middle, high
- figures of speech, the tropes and schemes
- imagery
- rhythm and speed

Unlike prose, where stylistic distinctions are relatively straightforward, in poetry, invention and arrangement extend into every detail. Intonation and accent, rhythm and speed, achieved by order and organization, are essential to convey the very message itself.

The poet imposes the rules and restrictions of his chosen meter, rhyme scheme, and imagery on the poem. Every component in the total poem needs to "fit" so well with the rest that the very words chosen, their spelling and sound, even the way the letters are arranged on the page, and the audible rhythm and tone when the poem is read aloud, all enhance -- nay, perfect -- the message. That is why poetry, in the words of Fowler, is the highest art of all.

Poetry and the Progymnasmata

Poetry proceeds from the totality of man, sense, imagination, intellect, love, desire, instinct, blood, and spirit together.
~ Jacques Maritain

The ancient Roman rhetorician Quintilian teaches that even young children need to study and imitate poetry, especially Virgil's and Homer's epic poetry. The ordinary education of a Roman boy was supposed to include music, gymnastics, and geometry. The study of music included Greek and Latin literature, especially Homer's great epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. To master the "musical" art of literature, then, children need to do analysis and imitation of verse.

Analysis and imitation according to Quintilian involves memorizing poetry, reading and understanding poetry, and analyzing every word, sentence, and stanza for grammatical content, figures of speech, and metrical feet. He claims that the greatness of Cicero, the most revered of Roman orators, originated in his practice of writing dialogue and verse as well as prose oratory.

Quintilian valued the *progymnasmata* as indispensable writing exercises, not only for future orators, but also for poets. Theon claims that his *progymnasmata* exercises are good for stories of poetry, and of history, and that the writing exercises provide training not only for history but also for eloquence in writing dialogue and verse. The ancients' word for "literature" was "poetry". That is, any creative prose was also known as "poetry" or "creation". The main distinction was not between verse and prose, but between creative and fictional, on the one hand, and historical or scientific (factual), on the other.

Ekphrasis [description], one of the later *progymnasmata*, is highly poetic in nature. It does not refer solely to prose description. The term *ekphrasis* is used to denote writing concerning itself with the visual arts, artistic objects, and/or visual scenes. Thus the definition of *ekphrasis* usually includes a type of writing essential to poetry or poetic pieces. It can be extended to encompass poetic thought as represented by both images and words.

We see, then, how poetry is not an isolated art, but is related to grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology. Poetry draws upon classical education in music, painting, and even mathematics. It relates to history and oratory as well as to literature. Poetry is the classical art which seeks harmony and order -- Beauty -- among all the other truths which the classical student endeavors to find.

How This Program Works

The structure and routine of *Classical Writing – Poetry* is similar to other *Classical Writing* books. However, whereas in *Classical Writing – Aesop*, for example, analysis and imitation are combined in one daily session and writing projects in another session, in *Classical Writing - Poetry* we have replaced the writing project with more emphasis on imitation of poetry. Students will not be writing very many original poetic creations, but rather spending time on true imitation of great poets. One must learn what great poetry is, and how it works, before one can attempt to write great poetry of one's own. Students will spend one daily session in analysis work and a separate daily session in imitation. Lessons, along with recommended corresponding poetry models, are all included in each volume.

This poetry program also differs from the rest of the *Classical Writing* curriculum in that we may on occasion study more than one model per week. Poetic "nuts and bolts" are best learned by studying a multitude of examples. Each day the students will work in depth with the weekly poem, as well as be exposed to several additional poems (familiar and new) from poetry anthologies. Poems will be selected to illustrate the concepts being studied. There are enough models in the model section for you to spend many weeks working on poetry. As always, the analysis and imitation routines will also work with any poetry you might like to bring in from your own poetry anthologies or other sources.

This book is the first volume in the *Classical Writing – Poetry* series.

Volume I: Poetry for Beginners
Volume II: Poetry for Intermediate Students
Volume III: Poetry for Advanced Students

Our central goal for the student of *Classical Writing - Poetry* is that he learn to analyze and understand poetry, the poet's message and the poet's use of language. To accomplish this goal, we draw directly on the Trivial Arts of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and we adopt the classical pedagogy of theory, analysis, imitation and practice.

The series as a whole is designed to teach poetry from beginning skills through junior or senior high school. The books are sequential but are meant neither to correspond to grade level nor to be used at the pace of exactly one volume per year. Students of all ages should begin at the beginning and progress at their own pace. We recommend that you study poetry with your student twelve weeks out of a typical thirty-six week school year, dedicating the other twenty-four weeks to a regular writing program such as the core *Classical Writing* series. The younger student will likely spend a couple of years working with the first volume. A middle school student should spend twelve weeks on Volume I the first year, and then proceed into Volumes II and III at a pace that best suits him during subsequent years.

Educational Aims

The weekly routines concentrate on one poem per week. The goal is to take apart every jot and tittle of that one poem, to analyze and imitate it in as many ways and at as many levels as possible:

- Content level
- Figures of speech: tropes and schemes
- Line/sentence level by scanning and by grammatical parsing
- Stanza/paragraph level by memorization and by use of the rhetorical topics of invention and arrangement

After analyzing the poem, the student will "put it back together" in an imitation project. Projects involve paraphrasing a poem to prose, as well as imitating content and form. Advanced students will be given a taste of writing their own poetry.

The main components of the *Classical Writing* curriculum common to the poetry books are:

1)   Systematic instruction in applied theory
2)   Analysis of poetry
3)   Imitation and practice of poetry

Theory

This book assumes that the student is currently working on a classical composition program, such as *Classical Writing*. The theory covered in this course is the theory of prosody, which is the study and classification of different poetic meters, rhyme schemes, and stanzas. We do not assume that the student studies any outside courses in regards to the theory of prosody. We do, however, assume that students will be studying grammar. We recommend Harvey's grammars, which are available from Mott Media, as the most rigorous courses of English grammar we have yet found, but another equivalent intensive grammar course will do just as well.

The students will study the theory of poetry on a daily basis, focusing on end rhyme, meter (iambic, trochaic, anapestic and dactylic are the four most common in English poetry), and many figures of speech. Our classification of the figures follows the organizational principles from the *Ad Herennium*, which divides the figures into schemes, figures of creative word arrangement, and tropes, figures of creative use of the meaning of words. They will also learn many of the basic poetic stanza forms.

Analysis

Analysis is the application of theory to great poems. We learn to understand and use the theory of prosody as we apply it to "model" poems. The student will study each theoretical concept by *analyzing the model,* which should be a great example poem that exhibits the concept under discussion. The student will then write *imitation* exercises, applying the concept as presented in the theory and analysis. From spelling and basic punctuation, to vocabulary and intensive grammar, to figures of speech, meter and feet, and advanced techniques in prosody, all these tools will be honed by students as they learn how to carefully read and appreciate great poetry. As the student analyzes, imitates, and practices writing, he will be living and breathing the thoughts and words of the best poets of all time.

Poems necessary for the analysis work in this book are suggested to coordinate with the theory. You may substitute or add works from your own favorite poetry anthologies.

Imitation and Practice

After the analysis of excellent models as a foundation, we work on the student's ability to imitate poetry. The imitation projects are inspired directly by some of the best poems in English literature. We imitate poems through copywork and dictation, by writing a prose paraphrase of them, and by using the model poem as a framework from which the student will write his own beginning poetry. With imitation we encourage practice, practice, and more practice.

How This Book Works

Classical Writing – Poetry for Beginners is designed for the student who has had no previous, or perhaps only a little, exposure to poetry. It emphasizes simple identification of basic figures of speech, such as rhyme, the most common meters in English poetry, and the most basic stanza forms, the couplet and the quatrain.

In this book the beginning student works with nursery rhymes, children's poems and songs, hymns, and patriotic songs as poetry models from which to learn prosody. There are, however, selections from great poets included even at this level. In subsequent volumes

we will work increasingly with more difficult selections, ranging from old English poetry up through 19th and 20th century British and American verse.

You may select models from your own resources, or, for your convenience, use the models included in the Appendix of this book. An accompanying model booklet, *Classical Poems for Beginners*, supplies a separate, clean copy of all recommended model poems for student use.

Who Would Benefit from this Book?

A beginning student of poetry should be a fluent reader of "chapter books", a fairly confident speller, and, overall, a student who solidly possesses the language arts skills of an upper level elementary student. For maximum benefit from this program the child should be able to spell at a third or fourth grade level at least. He should also be able to recognize basic syllabication of English words. When given the word "computer", he should be able to recognize that "computer" consists of three syllables: com-pu-ter. This is an essential skill to learning basic meter and feet of poetry. Any student for whom syllabication and spelling are difficult tasks should master those skills before approaching a serious study of poetry.

Any older child will also benefit from a classical study of poetry. The older the child, or the more experience he has had previously with poetry, the faster you will be able to teach. Start with simple model poems and gradually increase their difficulty.

For young writers, we will begin with Mother Goose nursery rhymes and move on to slightly more difficult verses from Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Other children's rhymes will be included, along with a few hymns of the Church and some more sophisticated poems as a challenge for the older students. Parents can customize this program by tailoring the difficulty of the poems they choose to work with and the speed with which they introduce new concepts. The very youngest children will surely be challenged with meter, and perhaps also with rhyme.

Additional Books Needed

The following reference books and handbooks will be needed for analysis of figures and for other exercises in poetry analysis and imitation:

- Dictionary
- Rhyming dictionary
- Thesaurus
- Poetry Anthologies (at different levels of difficulty)

Scheduling

We recommend that you set aside approximately twelve weeks of your school year to work on poetry in place of your regular work with *Classical Writing*.

The daily analysis and imitation work for this book is accomplished in two separate 30 - 40 minute sessions. These sessions may be scheduled separately, at two different times during the day, or together for an hour-long class once a day. Plan on doing *Classical Writing – Poetry* four days per week.

Chapter Four
ANALYSIS & IMITATION

As discussed in chapter 1, this book teaches poetry through three important components: theory, analysis, imitation and practice. Each week, the student learns some theoretical poetic concept, then analyzes a model poem exemplifying the concept, then imitates the model in order to practice the concept.

Theory refers to the concepts and terminology of classical prosody. The theory teaches basic principles of reading poetry, scanning it (to determine the poetic meter and line length), exploring figures of speech (including rhyme), and identifying stanza forms. Once the theory has been introduced, the student begins to *analyze* the weekly poetic model. He studies it in depth, taking apart every line, word by word. He looks at word use, figures of speech, and the rhythm and arrangement of words, all using the week's theory to focus and guide his study. Moving up a level to analyze whole lines and stanzas, he studies logical progression of thought, literary content, and the general style of the piece.

Analysis completed, the next task is imitation. Once the student understands the poem inside and out, he tries his own hand at imitating its various features. At the most basic level, imitation consists of copywork or dictation. (Technically, this is pure "reproduction".) As the student matures, his imitative efforts become more complex and involve paraphrasing a poem, writing an analysis of a poem, and finally, writing his own piece of poetry, imitating various features of the original at the level of words, phrases, lines, or stanzas. Students practice the art of poetry primarily through imitation of the great poets and only gradually begin work on their own creations.

Daily and Weekly Schedules

Two Daily Sessions

The daily schedule of two 30-40 minute sessions per day allows you to separate theory and analysis work in the first session, from imitation work in the second session. Young students especially will benefit from having their exercises divided into two different work periods. You can schedule these two sessions back to back if necessary, but we recommend scheduling the analysis session in the morning and the imitation session in the afternoon to give students a break as they attempt to master material that can be difficult. The analysis and imitation chapters provided later in the book are geared toward one session or the other. If you choose to combine the two sessions into one longer session, simply match up the appropriate instructions for each day.

Four Days Per Week

The *Classical Writing - Poetry* week consists of four days. Each of the four days has its own focus: reading and content analysis on day 1, figures of speech on day 2, poetic meter and rhythm on day 3, and stanza form on day 4. The following table illustrates the four-day double session structure with the topics to be studied in this book, *Poetry for Beginners*. The next two volumes in the series will continue the same four-day division but add increasingly advanced topics.

	Day 1: **Understanding Poetry**	Day 2: **Figures of Speech**	Day 3: **Poetic Meter**	Day 4: **Stanza Forms**
Analysis *session 1*	Reading carefully Asking basic ?s Narrative analysis Outlines	End rhyme Onomatopoeia Simile Metaphor Personification	Meter & feet Iambic meter Trochaic meter	Stanzas Couplets Tercets Quatrains
Imitation *session 2*	Copybook Dictation Writing Outlines Smoothed Essays	Imitation of figures	Imitation of lines of poetic meter	Imitation of stanza forms

Skill Levels

Each session's instruction (two sessions per day, analysis and imitation) is divided into a series of *skill levels* to be completed as students advance through the course. For example, day 1 analysis is divided into four skill levels:

Day 1 – Understanding Poetry - Analysis

- Reading Carefully
- Asking Basic Questions
- Understanding Narrative Poetry
- Working with Outlines

All students should begin at skill level 1 and progress at their own pace, mastering one skill level at a time. Skill levels are cumulative and build on one another.

Generally speaking, analysis and imitation sessions should be coordinated within each day so that the student works at the *same skill level for both daily sessions*. So, for example, the day 1 *imitation* skill levels are meant to coordinate with the day 1 *analysis* skill levels listed above.

Day 1 – Understanding Poetry - Imitation

- Copywork
- Dictation
- Writing Outlines
- Smoothed Essays

Students learning to Read Carefully (analysis skill level 1) will be doing basic Copywork (imitation skill level 1). Students who are Working with Outlines (analysis skill level 4) *must* have previously completed Writing Outlines (imitation skill level 3).

Note: There is some bit of flexibility here (and a couple exceptions to the rule in days 2 and 3); you are welcome to adapt the program as you see fit once you are familiar with it. To start, plan on coordinating skill levels within a given day.

Across the four days, students can easily work at different skill levels. For example, a student in day 1 skill level 1 can work on day 2 skill level 2. If you mix and match this way, you will need to select and coordinate your weekly poetry models carefully to reflect the poetry concepts you are working with from day to day. Because this is a challenging planning task, we recommend that you begin with the sample schedules and models provided (see the appendix and accompanying models book). Use the sample schedules and models as a guide if you do decide to customize your choice of poems.

Each student should progress through all the skill levels in sequence. If you are teaching multiple students, let students of greater ability work at the pace that suits them, even if younger siblings are working at a lower skill level. If necessary, you may also challenge older students with extra or more difficult poetry models.

Lessons

Each skill level is presented in its own section in the analysis and imitation chapters. Skill levels usually contain one or more associated *lessons*. Each lesson introduces one new theoretical concept. Lessons are to be taught actively by you. (Compare *routines*, which, once mastered, can be practiced on an ongoing basis by an increasingly independent student. See "Routines" below.) Lessons introduce new material.

You need *not* teach a new theory lesson every day or every week. Teach when children are ready to learn more. *Teach when you have time to teach.* Teach as many or as few lessons as your children can handle. Some concepts are more difficult than others. This means that some lessons are longer or more difficult than others. For *Classical Writing – Poetry*, most lessons will probably require at least one 30-40 minute analysis or imitation session. Lessons may be repeated the following week, or as often as necessary for reinforcement or review. Mastery of each concept is not immediately necessary because concepts will continue to be applied and practiced.

After you have taught all the lessons associated with a particular skill level, this does not necessarily mean that your student is ready to move up to the next skill level. Rather, you will want to "dwell" at each skill level and practice on at least two additional poems. Students need to apply the new concepts and to practice the associated analysis and imitation *routines*. Your student should completely familiarize himself and be comfortable with the theoretical concepts and skills before moving on. Move up only when your student is ready for more challenge and needs to advance.

Routines

Excellence in learning is almost always a product of good study habits. Good study habits occur when learning becomes a regular priority. In *Classical Writing*, we always try to "teach to a routine". This means that our students learn to approach great models with the same basic tools of analysis and imitation each time. They practice these tools over and over again. As the tools and techniques become familiar and automatic, the student gradually becomes adept at tackling even the most challenging literature and poetry. Our goal is to equip him to do this. *Classical Writing* emphasizes "teaching to a routine". The culmination of each skill level of the program is a routine of analysis and imitation/practice which the student should be able to use with any model poem he wishes to study. The skills of analyzing and imitating great poetry should stay with the student long after he completes *Classical Writing – Poetry.*

Analysis and imitation *routines* are built up slowly as students become familiar and comfortable with theoretical concepts and analysis and imitation techniques. Routines are comprised of a set of analysis or imitation activities to be performed on every poem the student wishes to study. They specify a way in which to approach any poem. Routines are built up from the concepts and techniques taught in that skill level. In other words, a skill level is a place to learn new concepts (through its associated lessons) and a place to "dwell" for a while and practice (through its associated routine). Skill levels are not "boxes to check off" but "places to dwell" and to master artistic theory and technique.

How to Use the Analysis and Imitation Chapters

Eight chapters are devoted to the beginner's level poetry analysis and imitation.

Chapter Six	Day 1 – Understanding Poetry – Analysis
Chapter Seven	Day 1 – Understanding Poetry – Imitation
Chapter Eight	Day 2 – Figures of Speech – Analysis
Chapter Nine	Day 2 – Figures of Speech – Imitation
Chapter Ten	Day 3 – Poetic Meter – Analysis
Chapter Eleven	Day 3 – Poetic Meter – Imitation
Chapter Twelve	Day 4 – Stanza Forms – Analysis
Chapter Thirteen	Day 4 – Stanza Forms – Imitation

Each analysis chapter begins with an important general introduction to poetic theory for that day. This introduction is written primarily for teachers and parents. Teaching parents need to familiarize themselves with this material first! Next come the skill levels, lessons and routines for that day's analysis.

Each imitation chapter begins with a few preliminaries, then gives the skill levels, lessons and routines for imitation for that day.

Overview tables are included throughout the book to help you keep track of daily sessions, the four days, skill levels, lessons, and routines. Suggestions are also included for choosing model poems. Copies of the overview tables are provided in an appendix so you can see them all together in one place or make copies easily.