

Lesson 7



BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

from FIFTY FAMOUS STORIES RETOLD by James Baldwin

There was once a king of Scotland whose name was Robert Bruce. He had need to be both brave and wise, for the times in which he lived were wild and rude. The King of England was at war with him, and had led a great army into Scotland to drive him out of the land.

Battle after battle had been fought. Six times had Bruce led his brave little army against his foes; and six times had his men been beaten, and driven into flight. At last his army was scattered, and he was forced to hide himself in the woods and in lonely places among the mountains.

One rainy day, Bruce lay on the ground under a rude shed, listening to the patter of the drops on the roof above him. He was tired and sick at heart, and ready to give up all hope. It seemed to him that there was no use for him to try to do anything more.

As he lay thinking, he saw a spider over his head, making ready to weave her web. He watched her as she toiled slowly and with great care. Six times she tried to throw her frail thread from one beam to another, and six times it fell short.

“Poor thing!” said Bruce: “you, too, know what it is to fail.”

But the spider did not lose hope with the sixth failure. With still more care, she made ready to try for the seventh time. Bruce almost forgot his own troubles as he watched her swing herself out upon the slender line. Would she fail again? No! The thread was carried safely to the beam, and fastened there.

“I, too, will try a seventh time!” cried Bruce.

He arose and called his men together. He told them of his plans, and sent them out with messages of cheer to his disheartened people. Soon

there was an army of brave Scotchmen around him. Another battle was fought, and the King of England was glad to go back into his own country.

I have heard it said, that, after that day, no one by the name of Bruce would ever hurt a spider. The lesson which the little creature had taught the king was never forgotten.



Lesson 7.1

Prose & Poetry

A LOOK AT LITERARY ELEMENTS IN THE "BRUCE AND THE SPIDER"

1

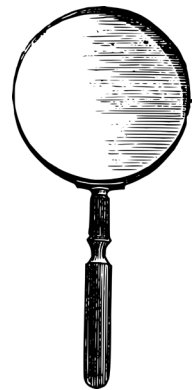
Read

- ♦ Listen carefully as your teacher reads the selection aloud. **Delight** in the story.

2

Inquire

- ♦ Does the **title** give any hint as to the content or message of the narrative? If this work was published by the author in a larger book or anthology, does that title give any hint?
- ♦ Discuss the meaning of these words in the context of the selection: *rude*, *scattered*, *sick at heart*, *toiled*, *slender*, *disheartened* and any unfamiliar words.
- ♦ Are there any unfamiliar persons, places, or things mentioned in the narrative? Discuss these with your teacher.
- ♦ Was there any part of the narrative you did not understand? If so, discuss this with your teacher and classmates.



3

Observe the Content

- ♦ **Setting** When and where does this story take place?
- ♦ **Characters** Who is (are) the main character(s) in this story?
- ♦ **Conflict** What is the main problem or crisis for the character(s)?
- ♦ **Resolution** Is the problem solved? If so, how? If not, why not?

4 Investigate the Context

Robert Bruce (1274-1329) is a national hero of Scotland. The victory mentioned at the end of this narrative was at the Battle of Bannockburn. You may wish to learn more about Bruce, William Wallace, and Scotland's long war for independence from England.

James Baldwin (1841-1925) was a largely self-educated teacher and school superintendent in Indiana. He loved the great stories of the Western tradition, and he wanted his students to love them too. Over the course of his lifetime he either edited or wrote more than fifty volumes, most of which were retellings of the best stories from literature and history for young people. These were standard fare in United States schoolrooms for many years. In fact, for several decades during the twentieth century, more than half of the books used in schools had been either edited or written by him. "Bruce and the Spider" is Baldwin's retelling of a traditional legend concerning the Scottish hero.



♦ Identify the Story's Literary Genre

- **Genre by Literary Period** What is the historical period/country of origin for this story?
- **Genre by Narrative Category** Is this narrative primarily **non-fiction** (a story that really happened) or **fiction** (a story told as if it really happened)?

5 Connect the Thoughts

- ♦ Does this story remind you of other stories with similar plots, messages, or characters?
- ♦ Does this story remind you of any proverbs or other well-known quotations? If so, enter these in your Commonplace Book, and note the connection with this story.



6 Profit and Delight

- ♦ **Delight** What are the sources of delight in this story?
- ♦ **Wisdom** What wisdom does this story furnish?
- ♦ **Record** in your Book of Centuries: Robert Bruce.
- ♦ **Read** a portion of the narrative aloud to your teacher with expression and with proper pauses.

Language Logic



GRAMMAR TERMS & DEFINITIONS



Review your grammar flashcards following the daily review system.

Eloquent Expression

COPIA OF WORDS: VOCABULARY STUDY



Conduct a vocabulary study for "Bruce and the Spider."

- A. Choose at least two words to study. If you need suggestions, see the list under Inquire in Literary Elements above. Work in your Writer's Journal.
- B. Complete Vocabulary Study steps A-G for each word (see *Bards & Poets II* Appendix).



Commonplace

LITERARY SELECTION

Session one of two commonplace sessions for this lesson. Literary Selection: "Bruce and the Spider" by James Baldwin.



Set your timer and begin copying. When finished, check your work carefully against the original for accuracy.



Lesson 7.2

Prose & Poetry

THEON'S SIX NARRATIVE ELEMENTS

You have probably heard of the questions that every newspaper reporter is taught to answer in a news story. They are often called the "Five W's and an H": **Who?**, **What?**, **Where?**, **When?**,

Why?, and **How?** Rudyard Kipling, who started his career as a newspaper reporter, called these questions his “Six Honest Serving-Men”¹:

I keep six honest serving-men
 (They taught me all I knew);
 Their names are What and Why and When
 And How and Where and Who.
 I send them over land and sea,
 I send them east and west...

Nothing is new under the sun! Aelius Theon was a Greek orator and teacher in the first century A.D. who had the same idea, only he used different words. He said every narrative will include six elements: **Person**, **Action**, **Place**, **Time**, **Manner**, and **Cause**. These line up perfectly with the "Five W's and an H":

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Person | Who? |
| Action | What? |
| Place | Where? |
| Time | When? |
| Manner | How? |
| Cause | Why? |

For each of these six elements, Theon developed questions to help his students thoroughly investigate a narrative.



Turn to the Appendix and study Theon's Six Narrative Elements.

- ♦ Discuss each element with your teacher.
- ♦ In your Writer's Journal, turn back two pages before the Figures of Description page. Title the page "Theon's Six Narrative Elements." In the next few lessons, you will copy all six. For now, copy the first two sections, Person and Action, including all of the questions for each.



Although there are several questions for each component, they will not all apply to every narrative. The list of questions is simply meant to stimulate your thinking and to remind you of all the possibilities for that component. And, to keep from being repetitious and boring, we will refer to these from now on as **Theon's Six**.

¹ Poem from "The Elephant's Story" in *Just So Stories*. Go there and read the rest of this delightful poem!

POETRY APPRECIATION

- Read and enjoy a few poems in your poetry anthology. Read one or two aloud with expression and proper pauses. Look for similes and anemographia in the poems you read, and make note of any you find for a future Commonplace Book entry.

Language Logic



GRAMMAR TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- Review your grammar flashcards following the daily review system.

SENTENCE DIAGRAMMING AND PARSING

- Copy this sentence into your Writer's Journal. Mark the prepositional phrases, subjects, and verbs. Then diagram the sentence. Refer to *Sentence Sense* as needed.

He had need of both bravery and wisdom, for the times were wild and rude.

- Orally parse these words with your teacher, using the charts in *Sentence Sense* to guide you. Check your answers as you go in *Bards & Poets II Teaching Helps*.

He, had need, wisdom, times



Eloquent Expression

SENTENCE STYLE – NOUN COPIA: COMMON OR PROPER

When you choose nouns that refer to people in your writing, consider their moral character or life circumstances. Remember, you might use words like *hero* or *villain* or *beggar*. Or consider the person's profession or vocation: *rhetorician* or *teacher* for *Erasmus*.

Another way to choose nouns is to use the grammar you have learned. Consider changing the noun's **class** (*Sentence Sense*, Section 3.6). You might substitute **common nouns** for **proper nouns**, and vice versa. This also works with nouns that name places, things or ideas: *the city* for *Philadelphia*, *document* for *Declaration of Independence*, or *faith* for *Christianity*. Examples:

Erasmus wrote a book for his students.

The rhetorician wrote *On Copia of Words and Ideas* for his students.

SENTENCE STYLE – NOUN COPIA: SINGULAR OR PLURAL

You might also consider changing the **number** of a noun or pronoun from **singular** to **plural**, and vice versa (*Sentence Sense*, Sections 1.4-1.5). This may mean that you have to change some verbs as well.

Your letter pleases me greatly.

Your letters please us greatly.

Just changing the number of a noun or pronoun may completely change the meaning of the sentence, so it is usually better to work with a noun's number together with synonyms. For example, make a plural noun singular by substituting a plural synonym for the singular noun: *students* for *class*. Or substitute a singular noun for a plural: *audience* for *spectators*.

SENTENCE STYLE – NOUN COPIA: PRONOUN SWITCH

Another way of putting your grammar studies to work in your writing is to substitute a pronoun for a noun, and vice versa. We studied this in Language Lessons for Grammar Students, and you probably do it almost without thinking as you write.

Erasmus wrote a book for his students.

He wrote it for his students.

Recall that the **antecedent** of a pronoun is the noun for which it stands in. In the examples above, *Erasmus* (noun) is the antecedent for *he* (pronoun) and *book* (noun) is the antecedent for *it* (pronoun). In your own writing, always make sure that the antecedent of every pronoun is clearly understood.

Complete these exercises in your Writer's Journal.

🌿 Paraphrase each sentence, changing the underlined common nouns to proper, and the underlined proper nouns to common. Proper nouns you may wish to use: *Edward I*, *Robert Bruce*, *Scottish War for Independence*, *Battle of Bannockburn*.

1. The king of England opposed the king of Scotland in the war.
2. The brave Scotchmen fought another battle, and Edward returned to his country.

🌿 Paraphrase these sentences, changing the number of the underlined nouns and pronouns (singular to plural, and plural to singular).



3. Bruce had led the army against his foes, but now he was hiding in the woods.

4. The spider carries her thread and fastens it on the beam overhead.

🌿 Paraphrase these sentences, exchanging the underlined **pronouns** for their **antecedents**, or vice versa. Keep the context of the original narrative in mind as you choose appropriate nouns.

5. The king of England was at war with him, and had led the soldiers into Scotland.

6. He watched her as she toiled. Six times the spider tried to throw her thread.

Commonplace

LITERARY SELECTION

Session two of two commonplace sessions for this lesson. Literary Selection: "Bruce and the Spider" by James Baldwin.

🌿 Set your timer and begin copying. When finished, check your work carefully against the original for accuracy.



Lesson 7.3

Prose & Poetry


PLOT OBSERVATION – THEON'S SIX

Each of Theon's Six elements is important, but Action is particularly so because the entire narrative "is a clarification of an action."¹ Under Person, we name the story's characters. Under Action, we give the story's plot. Theon's other elements will add detail about the the plot. When we retell a story orally, we naturally recount the plot by telling which character does what action. Our written retellings should begin there also, as we have been doing with our brief outlines. Theon's Six helps us add more detail.

"Bruce and the Spider" has only one main action. Yet this single action is set in the larger narrative of the life of the Scottish hero, and the author must convey this context. Thus, the opening two paragraphs provide a **Prologue** to the main action of the story; they give the

¹ George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 184.

background information on the main character and the current political situation. The final two paragraphs provide an **Epilogue** for the story after the main action of the narrative.

 Quickly read through the narrative once more. In the margin of the narrative at the beginning of this lesson, number the paragraphs and then mark the story as follows:

- A. Beside the first paragraph, write **Prologue**.
- B. Beside the third paragraph, write **Main Action**.
- C. Beside the second-to-last paragraph, write **Epilogue**.

Now, let's turn our attention back to Theon's Six. First, read the narrative below taken from from "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse" in *Aesop's Fables* by Joseph Jacobs. Then, study the example observation using Theon's Six.

Now you must know that a Town Mouse once upon a time went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The Town Mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: "I cannot understand, Cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life." No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the Town Mouse's residence late at night. "You will want some refreshment after our long journey," said the polite Town Mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining-room. There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice. Suddenly they heard growling and barking. "What is that?" said the Country Mouse. "It is only the dogs of the house," answered the other. "Only!" said the Country Mouse. "I do not like that music at my dinner." Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off. "Good-bye, Cousin," said the Country Mouse. "What! going so soon?" said the other. "Yes" he replied;

"Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."

Narrative Observation of The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Person

Town Mouse – "turned up his nose"

Country Mouse – "rough and ready," loves his cousin

Action

1. The Town Mouse visited his cousin the Country Mouse,
2. The Country Mouse welcomes his cousin and shares his food.
3. The Town Mouse does not care for the food; he invites his cousin to the town.
4. The two mice arrive in the town and begin to eat the feast they find there.
5. Barking dogs burst into the room and the mice have to run for their lives.
6. The Country Mouse heads back to his home.

Place

In the country – simple but hearty food

Town Mouse's residence – "grand dining-room" with "remains of a grand feast"

Time

"Once upon a time" – story setting

"Late at night" – arrival in town

Manner

Town Mouse – scornful, boastful

Country Mouse – hospitable, appreciative of the simple life

Cause

Town Mouse – did not like country fare; wanted to show his cousin town life

Country Mouse – better to be content and safe than have feasts and fear



In your Writer's Journal, write down your own observation of "Bruce and the Spider" using Theon's Six. Use Theon's questions as a guide, but do not worry if you cannot answer each. Remember they are just there to get you thinking.



🌿 Copy the sections Place and Time from Theon's Six into your Writer's Journal.

Language Logic



GRAMMAR TERMS & DEFINITIONS

🌿 Review your grammar flashcards following the daily review system.

SENTENCE DIAGRAMMING AND PARSING

🌿 Copy the sentence into your Writer's Journal. Mark the prepositional phrases, subjects, and verbs. Then diagram the sentence. Refer to *Sentence Sense* as needed.

His army was scattered, and Bruce hid himself in the woods and in lonely places among the mountains.

🌿 Orally parse these words with your teacher, using the charts in *Sentence Sense* to guide you. Check your answers as you go in *Bards & Poets II Teaching Helps*.

His, was scattered, Bruce, himself, mountains



Eloquent Expression

SENTENCE STYLE – NOUN COPIA: PERSON

Another way to apply grammar in your writing is to consider a noun's property of **person** (*Sentence Sense*, Section 1.5). For example, a sentence written in third person may be changed to first or second person. Again, you will probably need to adjust the rest of the sentence.

Erasmus was pleased by your letter. (3rd person)

I was pleased by your letter. (1st person)

You pleased me by your letter. (2nd person)

The noun property of person is used most often to create dialogue, but it can also be used to change the **point of view** (speaker) of an entire paragraph or narrative. We will practice that later in *Bards & Poets II*.

SENTENCE STYLE – VERB COPIA: TENSE

One more way to apply grammar in your writing is to consider a verb's property of **tense** (*Sentence Sense*, Section 3.7). For example, a sentence written in present may be changed to past or future tense. This may or may not require some adjustment to the rest of the sentence.

Your letter pleases Erasmus. (present)

Your letter pleased Erasums. (past)

Your letter will please Erasmus. (future)

Your letter has pleased Erasmus. (present perfect)

Your letter had pleased Erasmus. (past perfect)

Your letter will have pleased Erasmus. (future perfect)

Complete these exercises in your Writer's Journal.

🌿 Paraphrase each sentence twice, changing the person each time.

1. Bruce had led the army against his foes, but now he was hiding in the woods.
2. I, too, will try a seventh time!

🌿 Paraphrase these sentences in each of the other five tenses.

3. The king of England opposed the king of Scotland in the war.
4. Six times the spider tried to throw her thread.



Commonplace

FROM YOUR READING

🌿 From your poetry, literature, history, or Scripture reading, or from examples in *Bards & Poets II*, make one or two of the following entries in your Commonplace Book.

- ♦ Simile – include an attribution. Label it *simile*.
- ♦ Anemographia – include an attribution. Label it *anemographia*.
- ♦ Poetry – a stanza a poem with attribution. Label the stanza form, with rhyme pattern.



Lesson 7.4

Prose & Poetry

PLOT OBSERVATION

- ◉ In your Writer's Journal, copy the sections Manner and Cause from Theon's Six into your Writer's Journal.
- ◉ Without reading "Bruce and the Spider" again, retell the **plot** orally to your teacher. Refer to your Theon's Six notes if needed.



Language Logic



GRAMMAR TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- ◉ Review your grammar flashcards following the daily review system.

DICTION: NARRATIVE

- ◉ Work in your Writer's Journal. Write as your teacher dictates a passage to you from your Commonplace Book. When you are done, check your work carefully, word by word, against the original. Check for accurate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.



Eloquent Expression

SENTENCE STYLE – NOUN COPIA: APPOSITIVES

Appositive nouns (*Sentence Sense*, Sections 1.7F, 15.1-15.2) are also adjective elements. Titles, professions, or ranks are often appositive nouns. Later, we will see that compound pronouns like *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *myself*, etc. may also be used as appositives. Review the lessons from *Sentence Sense* if you need to.

Erasmus was pleased by your letter.

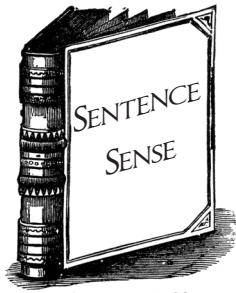
Erasmus the rhetorician was pleased by your letter.

Erasmus, the great rhetorician, was pleased by your letter.

Erasmus himself was pleased by your letter.

Erasmus, as your mentor, was pleased by your letter.

🌿 Study the following section in *Sentence Sense* regarding the proper use of commas with appositives.



II. Syntax: Capitalization and Punctuation

- ♦ 11.3C The Comma, Rule X including Rem. 1-3 Commas and Appositives *Reread each of the sentences above, and explain why they do or do not require commas, based on this rule.*

SENTENCE STYLE – COPIA OF CONSTRUCTION: POSSESSIVES AND 'OF' PHRASES

Possessive nouns and pronouns function as adjectives in the sentence (*Sentence Sense*, Sections 1.7C, 14.1). Either may be changed to an alternate possessive form using the preposition *of*.

Your letter pleased me greatly. That letter of yours pleased me greatly.

The contents of the letter pleased me. The letter's contents pleased me.

Complete these exercises in your Writer's Journal.

🌿 Paraphrase these sentences adding an appositive noun for each underlined noun.

1. Robert Bruce had need to be both brave and wise.
2. The King of England was glad to go back into his own country.

🌿 Paraphrase these sentences, exchanging the underlined **possessive** nouns and pronouns for an appropriate 'of' phrase, and the underlined 'of' phrases for an appropriate possessive form.

3. Six times her thread fell short, but the seventh, the effort of the spider succeeded.
4. The lesson of the spider was never forgotten by Bruce's family.



Lesson 7.5

Prose & Poetry

POETRY APPRECIATION

☉ Read and enjoy a few poems in your poetry anthology. Read one or two aloud with expression and proper pauses. Look for similes and anemographia in the poems you read, and make note of any you find for a future Commonplace Book entry.

Language Logic

GRAMMAR TERMS & DEFINITIONS



☉ Ask your teacher to quiz you with the grammar flashcards. Alternately, use the test feature in the Cottage Press Bards & Poets II Quizlet classroom for an online or printed quiz for Lesson 6. Combine with earlier sets for a complete review.

Eloquent Expression

LITERARY IMITATION

In this exercise we imitate the structure of a well-written sentence from literature. First, diagram the original sentence. Next, make a copy of just the **diagram skeleton** (the lines of the diagram without the words—the bones without the flesh!) and construct a new sentence on a new topic to fit the diagram.

Your letter greatly pleased me.



The Hobbit fully trusted Gandalf.

- 🌿 Imitate this sentence taken from *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter.

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way to the gate.

- A. Copy the sentence into your Writer's Journal. Mark the prepositional phrases, subjects, and verbs. Then diagram it. Refer to *Sentence Sense* as needed.
- B. Copy the sentence's **diagram skeleton**. On that skeleton, construct a new sentence based on "Bruce and the Spider." It should be a sentence you could use in your retelling.
- C. Write the new sentence below the diagram.



Classical Composition

THE WRITING SEQUENCE

Recall the basic steps of the writing sequence we will follow in *Bards & Poets II*:

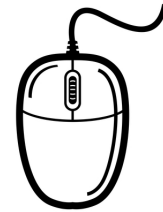
WRITING SEQUENCE FOR BARDS & POETS II

- ♦ **Plan:** Outline
- ♦ **Write:** Retell
- ♦ **Revise:** with your **Editor's Pen**
 - ✓ Big Picture
 - ✓ Zoom 5x: Paragraphs
 - ✓ Zoom 10x: Sentences
 - ✓ Fine Focus: Words

NARRATIVE RETELLING – FIRST DRAFT

Your work with Theon's Six was the first step, particularly with the notes you made for **action**. As you write your retelling, do your best to use proper grammar and spelling, but keep in mind that you will have opportunity to edit before you finalize it.

- 🌿 Retell "Bruce and the Spider" in writing, keeping the same characters, setting, and sequence of action.
- A. Refer to your plot observation of the narrative with Theon's Six, but do not review the original narrative before you write. Include:
- ◆ a heading, properly formatted. (Refer back to Lesson 3. 5 as needed.)
 - ◆ figure of speech: simile
 - ◆ figure of description: anemographia
- B. Ask your writing mentor to check that the assignment is complete.
- C. Type your retelling on the computer with spell-check turned off, or ask your writing mentor to type it exactly as you wrote it. Save, print, and file this first draft in your writing binder.



Commonplace

FROM YOUR READING

- 🌿 Favorite Passage: Add at least one passage of one to three sentences that captured your attention in your reading this week. It may be something you found beautiful, thought-provoking, funny, or interesting.

