

TruthQuest

HISTORY

How we tackle the *ThinkWrite* assignments

Cheryl from Tennessee says:

"Our approach to the ThinkWrite questions has been one of deep discussion and clarification. My 15-year-old son and I spend a good bit of time talking and working through the questions. What does he think? How can he prove it? Why is it important to him and to history in general? Through these discussions, we come up with a clear thesis that he can develop."

"With my younger students who are not yet writing five-paragraph essays, we do something similar, but I require only a paragraph or two depending on their ability and interest. Sometimes I must first make the effort to limit the topic so they can cover it well in their shorter writings."

"Occasionally, the kids come up with a topic that is more interesting for them than the ThinkWrite, and I will let them write about that instead, provided it is a valid and worthy topic. By the way, I don't always have them write for the ThinkWrites. I often use IEW to do other writing assignments based on our history study as well."

Cynthia from Alaska says:

"What I have my ninth grader do is write either a summary or a written narration (with more detail) on each topic we read about. If our reading or discussion lends itself to a particular type of essay, I will have her do that instead. These are usually 'compare/contrast' essays, but as she matures, I will add in 'persuasive' essays as well. If there is a topic that our 'spine' doesn't cover well, I can have her do a report on the topic, instead of us reading about it. Starting next year, she will be doing one large research project a year."

Kimberly from North Carolina says:

"Don't get too hung up in how much your student writes, but focus instead on how clearly he/she can convey important thoughts and ideas. In the beginning, you can do the ThinkWrite exercises as discussions between parent and child. If you want your student to write frequently, why not allow him to choose a passage to copy, or a quotation? If he does this a little each day, he will

begin to grasp the ideas of the time and then be able to respond with greater depth to the ThinkWrite questions, which are not daily work, but mini-assimilation exercises. They ask what we have studied so far? how does it all fit together? how is God either involved or forgotten by these people?"

"When we get to ThinkWrites, I read them aloud and try to start a conversation with my children. Sometimes, light bulbs go off immediately; other times, not so much. In the case of the latter, we come back to it a couple of days later after some THINK time."

"We actually THINK...then DISCUSS...then WRITE, because I find that most children, even teens, need to discuss in order to write. My oldest is currently taking a Bible class through a local Bible college and he still is discussing the first paper before he is writing . . . and he is a good writer. I think that it's just part of the process. I still play things over and over in my head until I get my mind wrapped around an idea...before I put pen to paper."

"I don't think that the goal is that the student can do the ThinkWrite when you get to that page (as if it were a test). Rather, the goal is that they work through it until they CAN articulate an answer."

Michelle Miller, author of TruthQuest History, says:

"When guiding and analyzing your children's ThinkWrite exercises, remember to think qualitatively, not quantitatively. This moves us away from the secular definition of education we absorbed as students, and toward what I believe to be something of God's definition: learning the truth and being able to communicate it! That is exactly the purpose of the occasional ThinkWrite exercises: they push the kids to think about what is true and to express these truths in their own words."

Lyn from Nebraska says:

"This is just my experience, but my 12-year-old son and 10-year-old-daughter are in no way able to write anything truly worthwhile about the upper-level ThinkWrite questions. They are, however, quite capable of having wonderful discussions about them! For our family, I've chosen to read the questions and have the kids keep them in mind while we study the topic involved. Then we stop and discuss the books we've read, what we've learned, and eventually the ThinkWrite question we started with. My 14-year-old daughter has been asked to write a couple of times. Once I had her do a paragraph, and once a five-paragraph essay. However, my point was to work on her writing skills not her knowledge of history."

Susan from Pennsylvania says:

"Honestly, you can do whatever you like. I know that isn't very helpful, but it's true. If you want to take several days to create a very polished draft, you can. If you want to tackle the ThinkWrites just by discussion, you can. If a paragraph would do it for you, no problem. Or if you want to make it a 'real essay,' that, too, is your choice."

"I have used ThinkWrite questions for essays for my son (who graduated last year), and other ThinkWrite questions I have utterly ignored. I don't think Michelle would mind that. TruthQuest History is FOR YOU to use as works best FOR YOU."