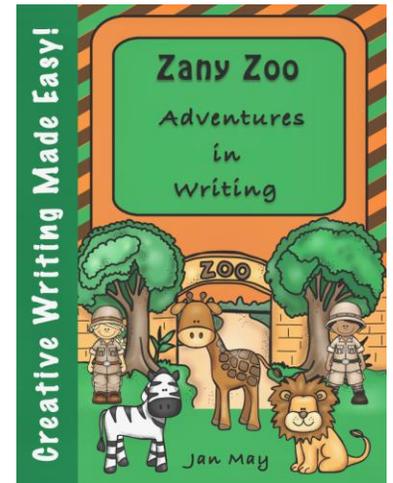


# Zany Zoo Adventures in Writing

Review by Cassandra Holdeman TOS

**My third-grade daughter can tell you a great story,** but when it comes to writing it down, she struggles to translate her thoughts to a fluid story. This is why I was excited to receive the print edition of *Zany Zoo*

*Adventures in Writing* by Jan May to review. This title from New Millennium School Books has truly helped my daughter's creative writing.



***Zany Zoo Adventures in Writing* features twelve easy-to-follow and easy-to-teach lessons in creative writing for ages eight to twelve.** It is designed to teach a student or group of students (as long as each student has his/her own workbook) the creative writing process step by step. Each lesson focuses on a different step of the writing process such as developing a character, creating a setting, creating a plot, and more so that, by the end of the twelve lessons, your student can create an entire story. The lessons begin with the teacher notes that explain exactly what you should have the student do, what he will be learning, and what the goal of the lesson is. Each lesson also has an activity for the student to complete that pertains to the lesson and sparks his creativity. The lessons encourage the student to think about more than just the who and what in a story. They help students dig deeper and use all their senses to write the story so that the reader can picture the story.

**Mixed in with writing the parts of their story,** students will also learn to use adjectives to make their work more descriptive, create dialogue so their zoo animals can talk to each other, and they will learn that a story doesn't just have one problem to solve, but it can have many problems to solve. Students also learn that it is better to show your characters' emotions and feelings rather than just telling about them. This book also features Zoo Animal Information Station Sheets that tell facts about several animals, and it has several sheets of bordered writing paper in the book for your students

**My daughter loved this creative writing book.** She worked her way through all twelve lessons and created a very cute finished story in about three weeks. She loved the concept of writing a story in a zoo setting. The lessons were easy for her to follow after I gave her the instructions, and she really enjoyed being able to make up all the details of her story. When she first started the lessons and the writing process, she was trying to base the story she was creating on a cartoon character she loves.

**As the lessons progressed** and she saw that she could put in as much imagination and creativity as she wanted, she went back and started changing the beginning details and creating her own brand-new character. She loved adding all the little details like the sights and sounds around the zoo, adjectives that described her characters, and the dialogue so her characters could talk to each other. She was truly excited to be creating a story, and each day she had to tell her dad all about it and share each part of the story with him.

**I was intrigued by this book** because I wanted to see if it would help my daughter be able to write a better story that included more details and a story that flowed instead of the typical type of stories she wrote that kept saying “and then.” I can assure you that I am amazed at the change in her stories. She worked hard to create the story she did for this book, but I can see that what she learned by completing this book has stuck with her, and she continues to use the lessons she learned in her writing. Her stories are more fluid, and they are much more detailed now. The only downside we found to this book was that we had to modify several of the activities for the lessons. They are written in the book to be completed with multiple students, so this didn’t work for my one third-grade student. I just adjusted them to make them work for us, but my daughter was a little disappointed because they would have been more fun if we could have completed them as they were written. Overall, if you want to improve your child’s creative writing, we highly recommend that you get a copy of *Zany Zoo Adventures in Writing* for your student.

