

Curriculum Review: *Creative Writing Made Easy with Isabel's Closet and Isabel's Secret* by Jan May

By Amy Blevins

What excites me most about *Creative Writing Made Easy* is my daughter's response. We went from fighting over writing practice each day to an amazing creative experience overnight.

Creative Writing Made Easy with Isabel's Closet and *Isabel's Secret* literally rocked our world. For at least four years, I have been struggling to teach my daughter to write. I knew she had the heart of a storyteller, but I could not seem to help her get all of her stories on paper. On the floor with her action figures and Legos she could keep all of her siblings enthralled with her stories for hours. Hand her a piece of paper and she would freeze, cry, and fight her way through each assignment. Until we found this series.



A big part of the reason that *Creative Writing Made Easy* was a perfect fit for us was actually found in the pages of *Isabel's Closet*. *Isabel's Closet* is a paper doll set. But it is not just any paper doll set! With this book, you can design the clothes for your own character. The clothes are a blank slate for a touch of artistry and in this my daughter excelled. After she finished each outfit we ran them through the laminator. She was captivated by the start with the idea of clothing design and this really helped her put heart into her story. Each day's assignment included working on a set of outfits or the design of a house (rooms inserted into page protectors) for the paper doll. Suddenly, each writing assignment was a joy instead of a terror.

The assignments included walked you through the process of defining and developing the character and plot of your very own book. From character development to descriptive writing each assignment is a simple next step that builds until the student is

ready to write her own short story. Since we were using this set with an 8th grader, Clara was able to work through the entire book in about six weeks. She took the assignments further than a student in the recommended ages (3rd -6th grade) would likely go and is in fact writing an entire book from her beginnings. Because of her age, I was able to give her the book and let her do all of the work on her own.

Another part of this set is the book called *Isabel's Secret* which is a novel designed to go along with the curriculum and provide an example of a good book using the techniques taught in the course. Even though the star of your own short story is supposed to be the character of your choice, Isabel is also supposed to play a part. My daughter enjoyed putting Isabel into her own story, but this was the only part of the curriculum set that was probably too young for her and perfect for girls in the recommended age range.

When *Creative Writing Made Easy* arrived in the mailbox, my two daughters actually argued over who got to use it! My youngest daughter is not quite ready developmentally for the work involved in using *Creative Writing Made Easy* so we decided to order her a second set to use when she is ready.



My Bottom Line: Both my daughter and I loved *Creative Writing Made Easy* and highly recommend it for all girls grades 3 and up. We will be using this curriculum with my second daughter and telling all our friends in real life too!

Disclaimer: I received Creative Writing Made Easy with Isabel's Closet and Isabel's Secret for free from the author in exchange for an honest review.