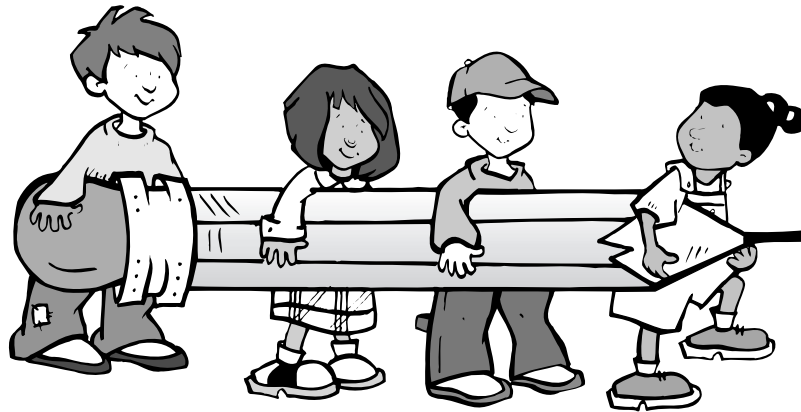


Four Square (4□) Writing Method

for Grades 7-9



Written by Judith S. Gould and Evan Jay Gould

Illustrated by Christina D. Schofield



Teaching & Learning Company

1204 Buchanan St., P.O. Box 10

Carthage, IL 62321-0010

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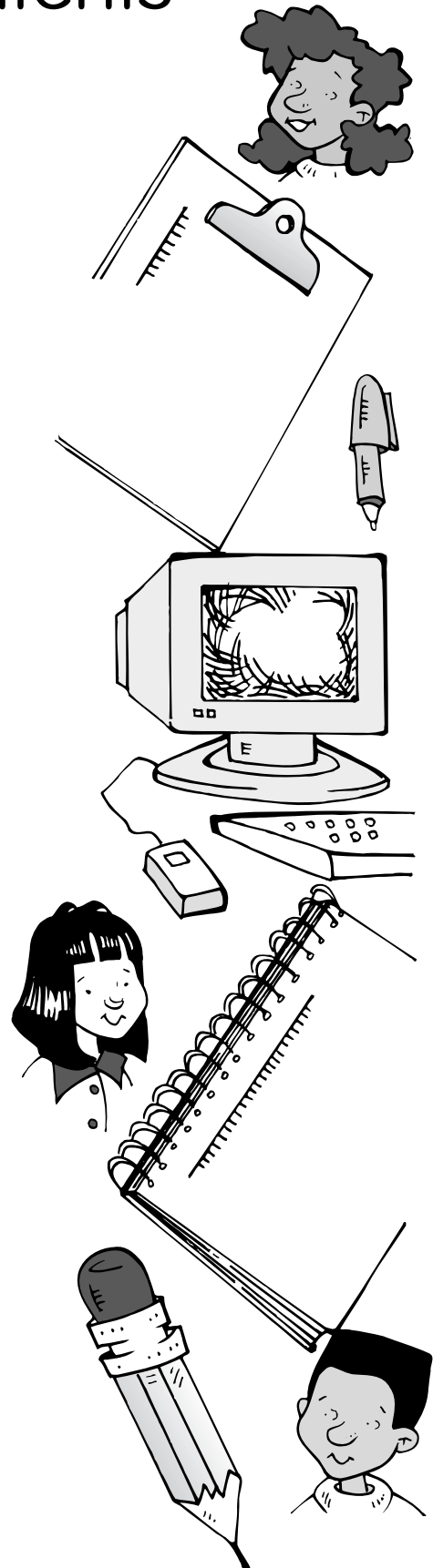
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Dear Teacher or Parent,

In collegiate studies of elementary education, future teachers learn about the importance of writing as a language art. Elementary education students are told that it is a vital form of expression and a communication skill which is required for the work force of the future. Writing is touted as being an interdisciplinary link for classroom teachers to apply almost universally. Today's grammar school teachers are aware of the authentic assessments that students will face, and that the basic language arts skills are vital to their success.

Even while writing has taken a stronger role in the elementary schools, a gap has developed at the primary and secondary levels. High school teachers are quick to point out that students arrive without the skills to take an essay test or to write a term paper. Yet elementary school teachers have been reluctant to abandon current practices.

While this disparity has existed for a long time, it did not escalate to a crisis proportion until states began assessing the writing of their elementary age students. The disturbing results of the initial tests have proven that our children lack fundamental writing skills. Many cannot produce a focused, well-supported and organized composition.

Why don't we teach writing? When we teach children to read, we give them decoding skills to use. When we teach them science, we give them the scientific method. When we teach mathematics, we give them skills and drill specific facts. And yet, we provide little skill instruction for writing but expect results.

In the following chapters we present a method of teaching basic writing skills that are applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. It can be applied for the narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive forms of writing. Prewriting and organizational skills will be taught through the use of a graphic organizer. This visual and kinesthetic aid is employed to focus writing, to provide detail and to enhance word choice. It is an excellent aid in preparing students for the demand/prompt draft writing assessments being given throughout the country.

Teaching writing through the use of a graphic organizer empowers students to write with confidence. Gloria Houston in her article, "Learning How Writing Works," for the September 1997 issue of *Writing Teacher* states that "Visual organizers help students to conceptualize, understand and structure a piece of written discourse successfully. Organizers eliminate 'jellyfish writing' and provide coherence and cohesiveness in a piece of writing."

We hope you can use the four square to help teach students writing, thought processes and study practices.

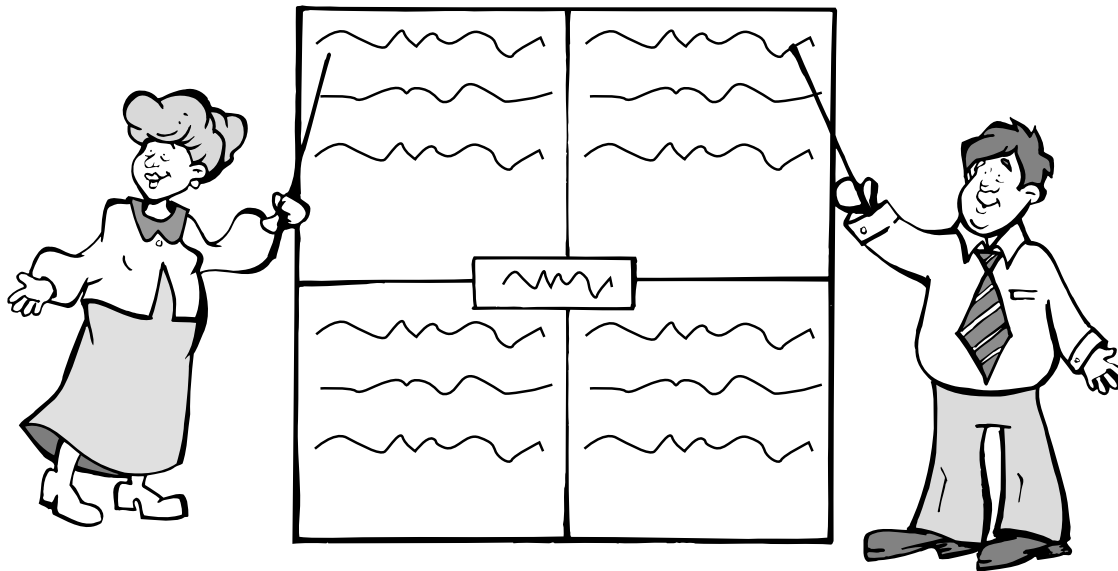
Sincerely,

Judith & Evan

Judith S. and Evan Jay Gould



How to Use This Book



Four square instruction and practice should be incorporated into a writing program that is rich with writing experiences. During the learning of the organizer, students should maintain poetry, shared writing and journal writing activities.

Section 1

Learning the Four Square

Each of these steps typically takes about a week of instruction and practice. There should be daily modeling and practice. It is important to remember to keep the writing on the organizer until all steps are complete.

Section 2

Other Forms of Composition

This section provides the same step-by-step instruction in organizing a composition for the narrative, descriptive and persuasive styles. It is recommended that these be taught *after* the expository style is learned.

Section 3

Samples of Four Square and Essays

This section is for instructor reference and can be used as models for students. There are samples for expository, narrative, descriptive and persuasive writing.

Section 4

Going Across the Curriculum

Four square is a tool for organizing, so why not move it out of the composition book and into students' study habits? There are hints for applying four square in other subject areas.

Section 5

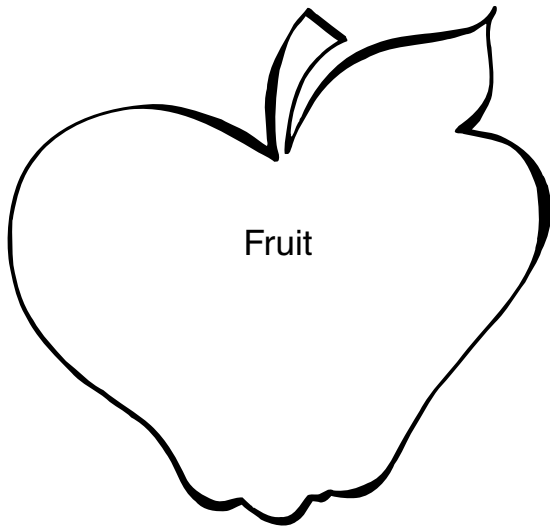
Practice Prompts

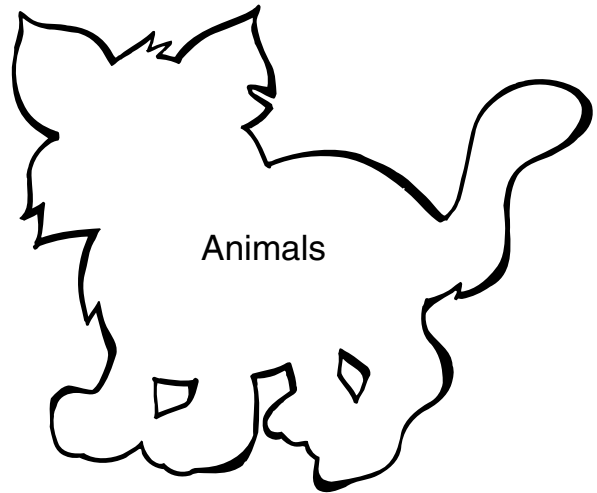
A few prompts to get you started. These are to be used when the entire process has been learned.

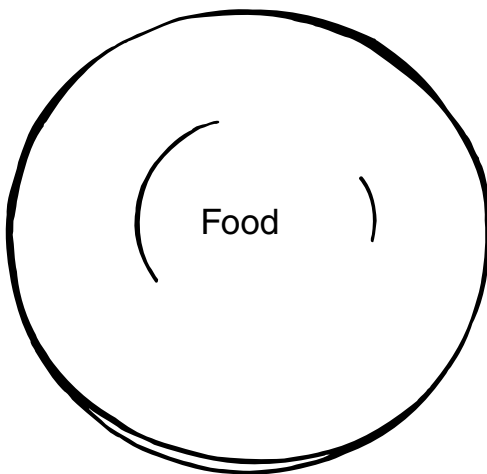
Name _____

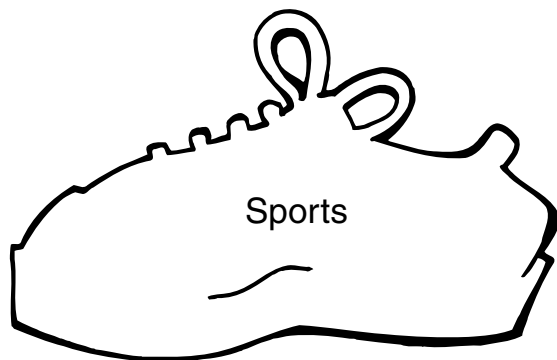
Understanding Relationships

Directions: Fill in the lines beneath the topic with three items that belong as subtopics.

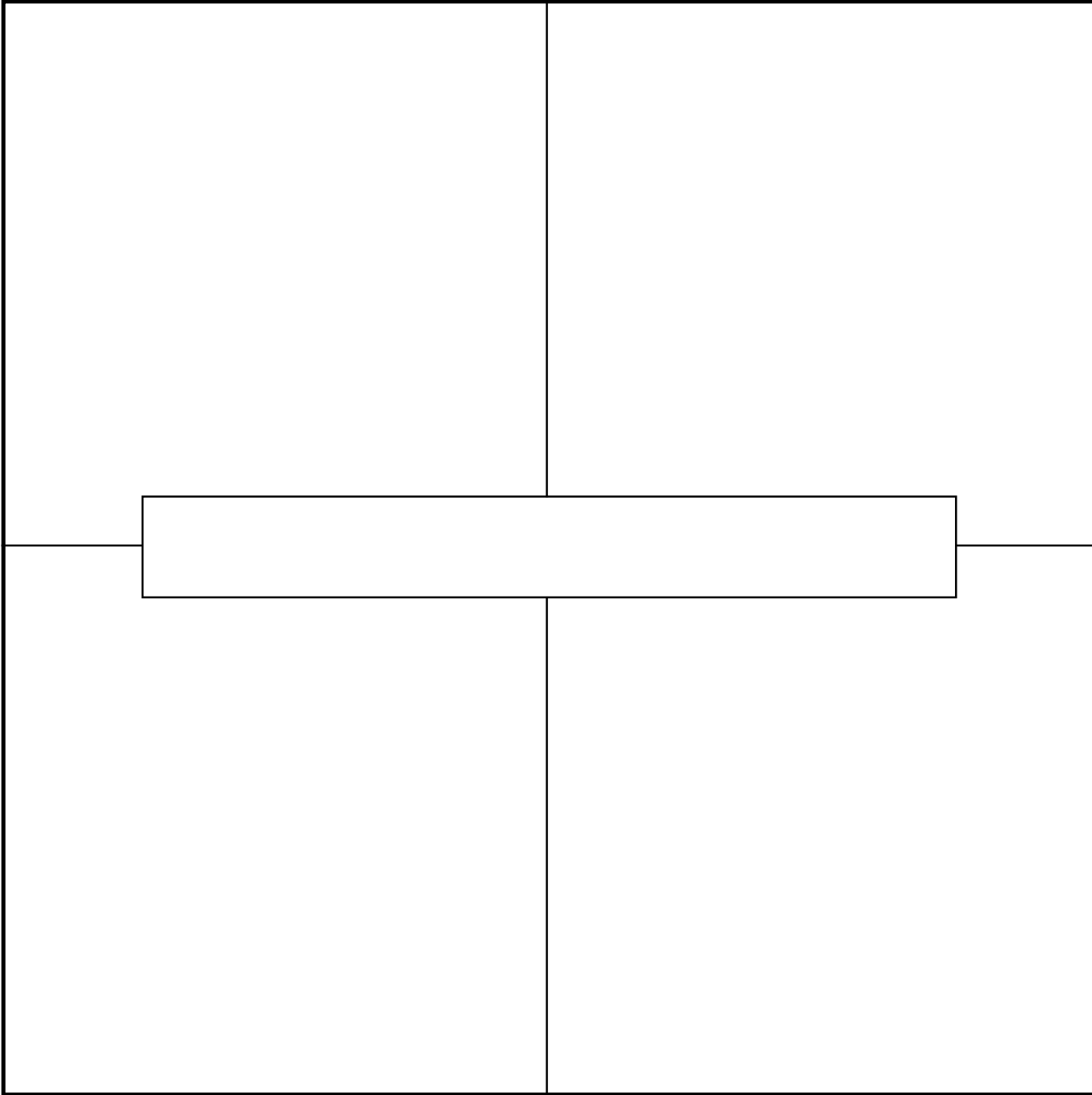








Group: _____



Directions: Complete the four square with one item in each box and a wrap-up sentence.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| Board Games | |
| | Wrap-Up Sentence: _____ _____ _____ |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| Healthy Foods | |
| | Wrap-Up Sentence: _____ _____ _____ |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| Things in the "Fridge" | |
| | Wrap-Up Sentence: _____ _____ _____ |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| Sports Equipment | |
| | Wrap-Up Sentence: _____ _____ _____ |