

Middle School Composition Course 2026-27

Amy Ruff's Homeschool Tutorials

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(919) 219-4338

Prospectus: Allow me to begin this prospectus with **testimonials** from past MS Comp classes. These vignettes will portray **my heart** to **lead children to love writing** & to **enable them to hone their writing skills** through my **vivid, engaging teaching** & **customized, personalized feedback**:

*I feel compelled to tell you the influence Amy has had on Bobbie. Missy, Bobbie's cat, was killed last week. It has been very difficult for her & all of us. My heart aches for the loss that Bobbie has suffered—you're wondering what this has to do with Amy. Well, last year in writing class, Amy assigned a **Biographical Character Sketch**. Bobbie chose her cat as the subject. I ran across it yesterday & read it. Needless to say, the tears were streaming as I read this beautiful tribute to a beloved pet. Little did Bobbie know at the time, she would lose her cat. I could not have taught Bobbie how to express herself the way Amy has.... So, Amy, I thank you so much for the gift you've given us. ~ 2006 Comp Mom*

Another testimony is **in my own words**: *A boy in my first Comp class (in 2002) wrote a **BCS = Biographical Character Sketch** to honor his grandpa who had died a slow death from diabetes after a long life amidst his loving family. After the grandpa's death, the student gave his written tribute to his grandma for Christmas. She had cared for the ailing grandpa over many years & was deeply blessed by her grandson's priceless gift.*

From Jeffrey & Hannah (Siblings), Duke Engineering 2020 Grad & NCSU Vet School 2025 Grad: *Mrs. Ruff's role in our lives has moved from teacher to what might well be described as a highly qualified life coach. From teaching our first Composition class to writing our teacher recommendations for Duke & NCSU, Mrs. Ruff has been an excellent teacher & supporting figure, family friend, & academic mentor on everything from excellent SAT/ACT prep to college-application essays.... We are incredibly thankful for all Mrs. Ruff has done for us.*

To undergird the **writing experience**, Composition centers around the following **key fundamentals**:

- **Grammar**
- **Punctuation**
- **Style**
- **Personalized editing feedback** from Mrs. Ruff on each piece of writing submitted by the student.

Knowing learning styles & language development differ for each student, I **gently weave the following 3 ingredients** into Comp via my **peppy, personalized editing feedback** on each student's writing:

- **Spelling**
- **Handwriting**
- **Vocab**

Composition's Writing-Grammar-Style Objectives:

- I. **Writing**
 - A. **Fall Writing HW = Homework**
 1. **WPs = Writing Prompts** inspire creative fiction!
 2. **JE = Journal Entries** encourage fictional & nonfictional reflection!
 3. **FHVs = Family History Vignettes** blend creative nonfiction & exposition!
 - B. **Winter Writing HW**
 1. **BCS = Biographical Character Sketch**
 2. The **BCS** transitions students across a **creative-expository bridge**.
 3. This bridge leads into our spring writing!
 - C. **Spring Writing HW**
 1. Occasional creative **WPs** & a few further reflective **JEs**
 2. **ERP = Expository Research Paper** empowers research that delves into a topic that interests the student who will learn a notecard-research method & a detailed-paper structure.
- II. **Grammar, Punctuation, & Style**
 - A. **GP = Grammar & Punctuation** rules, examples, & exercises will be dished out in manageable doses.
 - B. **EOS = Strunk & White's Elements of Style** is purchased by students in the **4th edition**.
 - C. **DS = Diagramming sentences** is taught by Mrs. Ruff in logical layers with sensible labels.

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Class Time/Location/Dates:

- Comp is **Tues 1210-1 PM 8/25-12/15/26 & 1/5-4/27/27** with breaks **10/13/26 fall, 11/24/26 Thanksgiving, & 3/9/27 spring.**
- Class is at **Grace Church room #118:** 200 Sage Rd, Chapel Hill, across from Lowe's/off I-40 at 15-501.

Materials:

1. ***Journal** in a style the student likes & is comfortable submitting to Mrs. Ruff for grading
2. ***Three-ring binder** with loose-leaf paper for taking class notes & sections with labeled tabs → Ideally, the three-ring binder will have clear pockets on the front & back covers for important PDFs: the Syllabus, the Grammar Guidelines, & the Proofreader's Marks
3. ***EOS = Elements of Style** → Strunk & White in the **4th edition** (ISBN 0 205 30902 X)



Student Age & Course Unit Value: Recommended student age ranges from advanced 6th to 10th grade. For 9th or 10th graders, high school English language or elective = ¾ unit because must supplement with some literary studies to = 1 unit.

Bio: Amy Ruff lives with her husband Brian next to her beloved alma mater, Duke University. Amy enjoys teaching, tutoring, & test prepping students **in person** as well as **online** in her areas of specialty: SAT, ACT, & APs (AP Eng Lang & Lit, AP Hx, AP Psych); literary analysis; research & composition; Spanish; psychology; philosophy & religion; executive-function & study skills.

Having completed her BA at Duke University with double majors in English & religion, Amy also earned a Certificate in Duke's rigorous interdisciplinary Women's Studies Program. While an undergraduate & after graduation, Amy worked in editing for the Duke University Press & continues to freelance edit.

Intuitive and seasoned at identifying & developing the potential in her students, Amy's energetic & engaging style enables students to grow in their knowledge of subject matter while also honing their critical-thinking skills & elevating their character. Having homeschooled her own children through high school, Amy continues to support the homeschooling community by offering group-class tutorials.

Counseling students to align self-understanding with their envisioned future, Amy has aided many to make wise choices for their post-high-school paths. She has assisted students to succeed on test prep & applications for acceptance into a range of schools. From Harvard, Duke, & Stanford to UNC & NCSU to community colleges across NC, Amy's students thrive in diverse academic, artistic, athletic, trade, & professional pursuits.

Of Argentine-Italian descent & hailing from Italian roots in Pittsburgh, PA, Amy attended boarding prep school on a full scholarship & received a college scholarship from the Spanish National Honor Society. Amy continued her Spanish studies at Duke & served on short-term missions as a Spanish interpreter. From the rudiments of grammar & vocabulary to encounters with cooking & dancing, Sra. Amy's students learn to love Latina language & culture!

Always eager to serve her community, Amy is a supporter of The Honor Foundation (helping special-ops retirees, like Amy's deceased big brother who was a decorated Navy SEAL), volunteer with local nonprofits, board VP for Feather in a Cap drama troupe, & graduate of REI (Racial Equity Institute) training.

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Registration & Tuition:

- The non-refundable **\$100 registration** is due by August, & **\$1000 tuition** is due as **\$500 in August & \$500 in January**:
 - Venmo** www.venmo.com/Amy-Ruff-8 • **Zelle** under 919-219-4338 • **Mail check** 1101 Anderson St 27705
- With payment, please include pertinent details as below: **name(s), age/grade, class(es), contact info.**

Names: Student's _____ Parents' _____

Address: _____

Grade _____ Age _____ Emails: _____

Phones: Student's _____ Parents' _____

Introduction to Psychology 845-10 AM <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900 <input type="checkbox"/> AP \$150/1000		
American Lit 10-1115 AM <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900 <input type="checkbox"/> AP \$150/1000		
Spanish I Registration/Tuition 1-2 PM Tues at Grace Church <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/800 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900	Spanish II Registration/Tuition 1115 AM-1210 PM Tues at Grace Church <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/950	Spanish III Registration/Tuition Time TBD <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/900 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/1000
Middle School Composition 1210-1 PM Tues at Grace Church <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/1000		
Introduction to Literature 2-3 PM Tues at Grace Church <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Track \$75/850 <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/900		
YSA Young Spanish Adventure on Tues at Grace Church 3-345 PM <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/800		
YWA Young Writers Adventure on Tues at Grace Church 345-430 PM <input type="checkbox"/> One Track Reg/Tuition \$100/900		
Spanish IV TBD Day/Time Registration/Tuition <input type="checkbox"/> Honors Track \$100/1000		
<u>Times for Amy's Tuesday 2026-27 Classes – Hybrid offerings of each class are conducted in person & via Zoom (per student preference) *at Grace Church:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *Tues/845-10 AM Intro Psych (regular & honors tracks; 8th-12th grades) • *Tues/10-1115 AM American Lit (regular, honors, AP tracks; 8th-12th grades) • *Tues/1115 AM-1210 PM Spanish II (regular & honors tracks; 7th-12th grades) • *Tues/1210-1 PM Middle School Composition (one track; 6th-10th grades) • *Tues/1-2 PM Spanish I (regular & honors tracks; 6th-11th grades) • *Tues/2-3 PM Intro Lit (regular & honors; 6th-10th grades) • *Tues/3-345 PM YSA Young Spanish Adventure (ages 7-10) • *Tues/345-430 PM YWA Young Writers Adventure (ages 7-10) • TBD time/place Spanish III (regular & honors tracks; 8th-11th grades) • TBD time/place Spanish IV (honors track only; 11th-12th grades) 		<u>Class Calendar 2026-27 Middle/High School:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8/25/26 First Fall Tues 2026 Class • 10/13/26 NO Class for Fall Break • 11/24/26 NO Class for Thanksgiving Break • 12/15/26 Last 2026 Tues Class • 1/5/27 First 2027 Tues Class • 3/9/27 NO Class for Spring Break • 5/11/27 Last Class (Comp ends 4/27/27)
<u>YWA/YSA 2026-27 Class Calendar:</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/8/26 First Fall Class • 10/13/26 NO Class Fall Break • 11/24/26 NO Class Thanksgiving • 12/1/26 Last Class • 1/12/27 First Class • 3/9/27 NO Class for Spring Break • 4/6/27 Last Class 		