

Biblical Worldview Scope for *Writing & Grammar 9* (4th ed.)

Learning to become a better writer is a worldview-rich experience. This document is our attempt to summarize what students need to understand and internalize if they are going to experience biblical worldview shaping in their learning of writing and grammar. The following biblical worldview themes have been woven into *Writing & Grammar 9* (4th ed.).

1. Identity: How am I presenting myself to my reader?

Creation: God made us in His image so that we may be His representatives (Gen. 1:26).

God made people in His image, intending for them to display His character in their actions. This calling includes writing. Writers should reflect God's attributes to readers by displaying love (the focus of *Writing & Grammar 7*) and empathy (the focus of *Writing & Grammar 8*). *Writing & Grammar 9* continues to unfold these ideas, primarily emphasizing students' need to find their identities in Christ.

Fall: The world tells us that we ought to choose our own identity.

In a fallen world, people tend to prioritize human autonomy and the choice of identity over God's expectation of finding identity in Him. Writers express themselves however they please, counting on readers to affirm their identities. At the same time, readers feel free to ignore the writer's intent, adapting the text to their own identities. Truth, then, is not about reality but about affirming writers' or readers' choices. The content of the message is overshadowed by the desires of the writer and the reader. Opinions and perceptions replace truth, and the term *my truth* is the new reality.

Redemption: Modern individualism makes representing Christ faithfully very difficult.

Even though the image of God is restored in Christians, the temptation to indulge in autonomous individualism remains. Followers of Christ must resist the desire for reckless self-expression or approval from the world. Instead, they must represent Christ in their writing, which means following His example and responding to others in His name. The pattern of Christ's communication entails knowing both the audience and their beliefs, speaking to them in their own contexts, and relaying hard truths guided by love. Thus, a Christian approaches his writing with humility, seeking to understand his opponents and their positions. He resists the temptation to belittle readers who disagree with his position as well as the temptation to hold back the truth to avoid offending readers.

2. Logic: How does the organization of my communication show love to my neighbor?

Creation: God has demonstrated His love for us through His clear and well-organized communication to us.

God's communication to man is *organized* communication. It is logical, providing a framework of clarity and coherence. God made humans rational creatures and tailored His communication in this way to benefit them. This design is a demonstration of God's love for people. Following His example, people ought to communicate with one another logically.

Fall: In our fallen world, people often use logic without love, while others use "love" without logic.

Recognizing the power of logic, people often use this God-given tool for evil rather than good in their writing. Sin nature compels many to use logic to embarrass, diminish, and/or defeat opponents in arguments (exemplified by

cable news and internet debates). Others bypass logic altogether to promote untruth, seeking to manipulate others. Bypassing logic can be driven by selfish motives or by misunderstanding the reader's best interest.

Redemption: A Christian's writing must be guided by grace.

The burden of coherence and clarity is on the communicator. Logically organized writing aligns with God's character and example in creation. It also solves many practical issues, but even more importantly for a Christian, it demonstrates love for the reader. This includes readers who are hostile to a Christian's message. It is important to resist the temptation to use logical communication as a means of abusing one's opposition. It is also important not to neglect logic, thereby demonstrating a lack of care for one's neighbor.

3. Integrity: How does my preparation for writing reveal my character?

Creation: Authentic writing begins with steps of preparation that are virtuous.

By God's design, careful planning and preparation are typically precursors to success. This is certainly the case with writing. Writers must research, and that research must be aimed at truth. This goal requires three skills: thoroughness, equity, and credibility. Thoroughness demonstrates care to include all relevant information, even if that information appears to contradict the writer's point of view. Equity involves considering sources that skillfully support the opposing view. Credibility is attained when researchers restrict themselves to professional, trustworthy sources.

Fall: Some forms of preparation have led to elevating one's point of view at the expense of truth.

The world is full of misinformation, half-truths, and poorly understood positions, yet most people retain confidence in conveying their point of view. When people want to demonstrate that their point of view is valid, they may leave out information that contradicts or challenges their view. They might use sources that maintain their own personal suppositions regardless of veracity. For them, winning an argument is more important than telling the truth.

Redemption: Biblical preparation values truth as more precious than personal vindication.

Christians value (love) truth because they value (love) Christ, who is Himself truth (John 14:6). Therefore, Christians must resist confusing their own personal tastes and traditions with truth, which is ultimately determined by God's Word. They must be open to changing their views if those views conflict with discoveries they make through proper research and investigation. For instance, political research must aim at the truth, not at defending a particular political party or a particular candidate.

4. Judgment: How do I make judgments about important issues?

Creation: Moving beyond mere opinion toward judgment requires that we judge based on God's Word.

God did not allow Adam to decide which trees were acceptable for food. God preinterpreted the world, declaring right from wrong. Adam was to use that interpretation to discern good and evil. Biblical principles are the foundation for determining one's position regarding any issue. Applying those principles wisely is essential if one is to arrive at right conclusions.

Fall: In a fallen world, standards for judgment are based on societal norms or left to personal preference.

Since Genesis 3, humans have made ethical decisions based on their own autonomous interpretations of the world, thus leaving ethical decision-making without an objective basis. Right and wrong are based on societal consensus or individual determination. Scripture is viewed as restrictive and outdated. Using the Bible as a criterion of judgment-making is seen not merely as backward but even hateful.

Redemption: Christians must apply biblical principles prudently in a fallen world.

Wise ethical decisions can come only through submission to biblical principles. But in a fallen world, the Christian must also consider the expected outcomes of these decisions. Because the Christian continues to fight his own sin nature, he must also be wary of his motivations when applying biblical principles. Effective Christian judgment can be accomplished through a three-step process: determining relevant biblical principles, predicting outcomes based on those principles, and evaluating the motivation for incorporating those principles.