

Gradus ad Montem • Year 1 (Grade 9)

The Progymnasmata • Teacher Guide • Units 1–4

This volume is the teacher's. It contains every answer key, unit quiz and sample composition for Units 1–4, and the companion Review, Declamation and Exams Teacher Guide contains the semester and final exam papers. The student's pages are in the Student Workbook volume; a student who has this volume has the keys. Sample compositions show the target, not the minimum — a composition can earn a 4 without matching them.

This volume joins the four Year 1 Teacher Guides in one place. The unit files remain the masters: make changes there, then reassemble this volume. Assembled October 29, 2026.

Contents

- Unit 1: Fable (Weeks 1–6)
- Unit 2: Narrative (Weeks 7–15)
- Unit 3: Chreia (Weeks 19–26)
- Unit 4: Maxim (Weeks 27–34)

Weeks 16–18 and 35–36 have their own pair of books: the Review, Declamation and Exams Student Workbook and its Teacher Guide. The front matter for printed and PDF editions is in Curriculum/Front Matter.md.

Gradus ad Montem • Unit 1: Fable

Teacher Guide • Weeks 1–6

This guide is for whoever teaches Day 1: the co-op teacher or the parent at home. It has a Day 1 plan for both branches, notes for Days 2–4, the dictation passages, a full answer key, and a sample composition for every assignment. The model texts are printed in the Student Workbook; keep a copy open beside this guide.

What the sample compositions are for. Each assignment's sample shows the one who marks what the exercise looks like done well, so that marking has a fixed star. It is a target, not the bar: a composition can earn a 4 without approaching the sample, and no student piece should be measured against it sentence by sentence. Read the sample before you teach; do not read it to the student before he writes. After his final copy is finished, you may read the sample together and compare — that is Theon's own method, setting subjects the ancients treated so the ancients can correct (Kennedy, pp. 14–15).

On honest work. The samples are for the teacher, and the same honesty binds the student. In an age when a machine will draft anything asked of it, the writing in this course must be the student's own, from plan to final copy — a student who hands in words he did not write has not cheated his teacher so much as refused the training, like a man who sends a servant to do his exercises and wonders why he is not stronger. The course's own structure is the safeguard: the read-aloud signature on every checklist, the revision conferences, and the timed exam compositions, which no one else can write. A student who can talk through his piece owns it.

How to use this guide

Prepare each week by reading that week's background note, the model texts in the workbook, and the answer key. Plan on 20–30 minutes.

Day 1 is taught in one of two ways. Each week's Day 1 plan has two columns. The segments and content are the same; the time and the method differ.

	Co-op branch	Home branch
Length	90 minutes, with a class	75 minutes, one-on-one
Recitation	Each student recites; classmates listen	Student recites to the parent
Narration	One student begins, others continue and correct	Student narrates; parent asks follow-up questions
Analysis	Class discussion, answers on the board	Conversation, answers on a whiteboard or in the notebook
Grading	Co-op teacher grades the composition	Parent grades the composition

Days 2–4 are the same in both branches. The student works independently for about 45 minutes a day. Each week lists what the parent should check.

Day 1 timing

Segment	Co-op	Home
Recitation and last week's composition	10 min	5 min
Model text and narration	15 min	10 min
Teach the form	15 min	10 min
Analyze the model	15 min	15 min
Grammar	15 min	15 min
Literature discussion	15 min	15 min
Assign Days 2–4	5 min	5 min

Materials: the Student Workbook; Kennedy, *Progymnasmata* (free PDF from SBL (<https://www.sbl-site.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/KennedyProgymnasmata.pdf>)); an edition of Aesop (Townsend's translation matches the workbook); Bulfinch's *Age of Fable* or Hamilton's *Mythology*; Hesiod in Evelyn-White's translation; La Fontaine in Wright's translation; a Bible; the student's three notebooks.

Page references. References such as (Kennedy, p. 25), or simply (p. 25), are to Kennedy's translation. This guide paraphrases the handbooks rather than quoting them.

Background for the teacher

What the handbooks teach about fable

The first exercise. Every Greek handbook except Theon's begins with fable. Hermogenes says it comes first because it helps bring young minds into good order (Kennedy, p. 74). Nicolaus adds that composing fables teaches students how to narrate (p. 135), which prepares them for the next unit.

Definition. Aphthonius defines a fable as a made-up statement that pictures a truth (p. 96). Nicolaus calls it a false account that pictures a truth because it is told persuasively (p. 133). Students memorize a plain-English version: *a made-up story that gives a picture of a truth*.

Three kinds (Aphthonius, p. 96): *rational*, when people act; *ethical*, when animals show human character; *mixed*, when both appear. The names are older than ours: "ethical" here means "showing character" (Greek *ēthos*), not "moral."

Where the moral goes. Stated first, the moral is a *promythion*; stated last, an *epimythion*. Nicolaus prefers the end: if the young would take advice stated plainly, there would be no need for a fable at all (p. 136). Townsend's translation often leaves the moral inside a character's

speech instead; this is worth pointing out.

Plausibility. A fable is admittedly false, so it must be believable in its parts. Hermogenes: give fitting traits to each character, a peacock for beauty, a fox for cleverness (p. 74). Nicolaus: the fox should speak craftily, the sheep simply, and a mouse should not advise the kingdom of animals (p. 134).

Style. Plain and close to conversation (Hermogenes, p. 75; Nicolaus, p. 136). Long, balanced periodic sentences belong to later exercises.

Why these six moves

Theon lists what students do with a fable: state it, inflect it, weave it into a narrative, expand it, compress it, and add or invent a conclusion (pp. 24–26). (Refuting and confirming fables comes in Year 2.) This unit gives one week to each, in an order that builds: restate, expand, compress, rearrange, weave, invent. Theon's inflection drill begins in Week 5 and continues as a warm-up for the rest of the year.

Correcting drafts

Theon's advice is the rule for this whole curriculum. In the early stages, he says, the teacher should not try to correct every mistake, only a few of the most obvious, so that the student does not grow discouraged and give up hope (p. 14). Explain why each is a fault and how to do better. In Unit 1, mark no more than three problems per composition, and always name one thing done well.

Grading Unit 1 compositions

Score each final copy 1–4 on six criteria (24 points). Week 1 is diagnostic: grade it, but weight it lightly.

Criterion	4	3	2	1
Form	Complete action (beginning, middle, end); the moral fits exactly; the week's assigned move done fully	One small gap	A part missing, or a loosely fitting moral	No clear action or no moral
Clarity	Nothing can be misread	One unclear sentence	Several unclear sentences	Hard to follow
Conciseness	Nothing needed missing, nothing needless added	One wordy passage	Padding or gaps in several places	Mostly padding, or mostly gaps
Credibility	Every character true to its nature	One lapse	Several lapses	Characters act at random
Correct English	Clean	1–3 errors	4–7 errors	8 or more errors
Delivery	Read aloud clearly, at a good pace, with expression	Mostly clear	Hurried or flat	Hard to hear or follow

Scoring Delivery. Score what you heard. At co-op, score Delivery for the pieces delivered in the week's rotation; for the rest, take the parent's signature on the read-aloud checklist as a 3, and let the student's next turn in the rotation raise or lower it. At home, the parent hears every piece and scores every piece. A piece no one has heard aloud is unfinished: it waits for its signature before it is graded.

Grammar and diagramming in this unit

Week	Concept	Diagram added
1	Parts of speech; subject and predicate	Subject and verb on the base line
2	Nouns: number, gender, person, case	Direct object
3	Pronouns and antecedents; pronoun case	(practice)
4	Verb tense; principal parts	Verb phrases with helping verbs
5	Active and passive voice; the inflection drill	(practice)
6	Adjectives and adverbs	Modifiers on slanted lines

Diagrams in this guide are drawn in plain text. In notebooks, students draw the subject-verb line crossing the base line, the direct-object line standing on it, and modifiers on lines slanting down to the right.

Week 1 • Restating a Fable

Goals: Students learn the definition and three kinds of fable, restate a fable in their own words, and write its moral as both a promythion and an epimythion. They set up their three notebooks.

Background. Restatement is the first thing every handbook asks of a fable. Theon wants a fable told plainly and naturally, and says students should first learn by heart fables the ancients told well (Kennedy, p. 24). That is why "The Ants and the Grasshopper" is both this week's model and the unit's memory work. Aphthonius' own version of this fable (Kennedy, p. 96) is a useful comparison for you: he ends it with a stated epimythion, that the young who will not work fare badly when they are old, while Townsend leaves the moral in the Ants' retort.

Day 1 plan

Segment	Co-op (90 min)	Home (75 min)
Setup (in place of recitation)	10 min. Show the three notebooks and what goes in each. Students label them.	5 min. Set up the notebooks together.
Model and narration	15 min. Read the fable aloud twice. Call on one student to begin narrating; others continue and correct.	10 min. Read it twice; the student narrates. Ask: "What did the Grasshopper say? What did the Ants answer?"
Teach the form	15 min. Write the definition on the board; students copy it. Teach the three kinds with an example of each from fables the class knows.	10 min. Copy the definition together; name a fable of each kind.
Analyze	15 min. Analysis questions 1–5, answers on the board.	15 min. Same questions in conversation.
Grammar	15 min. Teach the eight parts of speech from the workbook table, then subject and predicate. Do exercise A, sentence 1 together.	15 min. Same, at the table.
Literature	15 min. Discussion questions below.	15 min. Same, as conversation.
Assign	5 min. Walk through Days 2–4.	5 min. Same.

Analysis: expected answers

1. **Characters.** The Ants want to keep the food they worked for; the Grasshopper wants food now, though he did no work.
2. **Plot.** *Beginning:* on a fine winter day the Ants are drying the grain they gathered in summer. *Middle:* a starving Grasshopper begs for food; the Ants ask why he stored nothing; he says he spent the summer singing. *End:* the Ants mock him: if he sang all summer, he can dance supperless to bed in winter.

3. **Kind.** Ethical: animals with human character.
4. **The truth pictured.** Sample answers: "Those who will not work in good times will go without in hard times." "Prepare in the season of plenty for the season of want." Accept any sentence that matches the story.
5. **Where the moral lives.** Townsend states no separate moral. The Ants' last speech carries it. Point out that this is a third option besides promythion and epimythion: the moral spoken by a character.

Literature discussion (Bulfinch, Chapter I; Hesiod, *Theogony* 116–210)

1. **What comes first?** Hesiod begins with Chaos, then Earth and the other powers, and the gods are *born*. Genesis begins with God, who *creates*. What difference does it make that Hesiod's gods have a beginning? (*Aim: the Greek gods are part of the world; the God of Genesis is before and above it.*)
2. **What are the gods like?** From Bulfinch, are the Olympians more like the Ants or the Grasshopper? Do they act from justice, or from desire and rivalry? (*Open; ask for evidence.*)
3. **Why tell myths?** Our definition says a fable is a made-up story that pictures a truth. Do the Greek myths picture truths too? Name one. (*Note for the teacher: Nicolaus says stories about the gods are best left to philosophers, who explain their allegories (p. 134). Students will meet that question again in Year 4.*)

Days 2–4

- **Day 2.** The synonym exercise needs a dictionary or thesaurus. The outline should have only key words; if a student writes full sentences, have him cut them down, because Day 3 depends on writing from key words.
- **Day 3.** The restatement is written *from the outline with the workbook closed*. Check that Versions A and B word the moral differently.
- **Day 4.** Read the dictation passage below at a steady pace, each phrase twice. The student checks it against the text and corrects in a different color.
- **Parent check:** outline done on Day 2; both versions written on Day 3; checklist attached to the final copy on Day 4.

Dictation (Day 4):

The Ants inquired of him, "Why did you not treasure up food during the summer?" He replied, "I had not leisure enough. I passed the days in singing."

Answer key

Style: synonyms (sample answers)

Word	Synonyms
grain	wheat, corn, seed, harvest, stores, provisions
perishing	starving, dying, wasting away, famished, fainting
begged	pleaded, implored, entreated, besought, petitioned
derision	scorn, mockery, ridicule, contempt, scoffing
foolish	silly, thoughtless, senseless, idle, unwise

Sample rewrites of "A Grasshopper, perishing with famine, passed by and earnestly begged for a little food":

- A famished Grasshopper wandered past and pleaded for a crumb.
- Wasting away from hunger, a Grasshopper came by and implored them for a little wheat.
- A starving Grasshopper passed and earnestly entreated them for a few grains.

Grammar A: parts of speech

1. The (*adjective*) ants (*noun*) worked (*verb*) hard (*adverb*).
2. A (*adjective*) hungry (*adjective*) grasshopper (*noun*) came (*verb*) to (*preposition*) their (*pronoun*) door (*noun*).
3. He (*pronoun*) sang (*verb*) and (*conjunction*) danced (*verb*) in (*preposition*) the (*adjective*) summer (*noun*).
4. Alas (*interjection*), the (*adjective*) winter (*noun*) was (*verb*) long (*adjective*)!
5. The (*adjective*) wise (*adjective*) ants (*noun*) answered (*verb*) him (*pronoun*) sharply (*adverb*).

Notes: *their* is a possessive pronoun; some grammars call it a possessive adjective, and either answer is acceptable. In sentence 4, *long* is an adjective describing *winter*, even though it follows the verb.

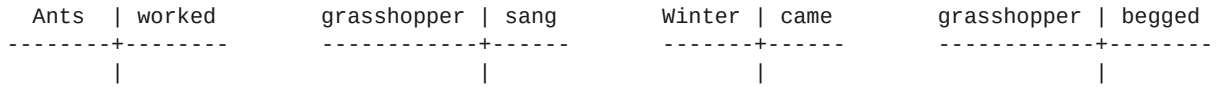
Grammar B: subject and predicate

The simple subject and simple predicate are in bold.

1. The ants \ | **were drying** grain.
2. A hungry grasshopper \ | **passed** by.
3. The foolish singer \ | **begged** for food.
4. **Winter** \ | **came** quickly.
5. The ants in the field \ | **laughed** at him.
6. His summer songs \ | **could** not **feed** him.

7. Every ant \ | **had worked** all summer.
8. The cold north wind \ | **blew** across the field.

Grammar C: diagrams



Sample composition

Restatement (about 130 words)

On a bright winter morning, the Ants were spreading out the grain they had gathered in summer to dry it in the sun. A Grasshopper came limping by, thin and starving, and begged them for a little food. "Why didn't you store up food of your own last summer?" the Ants asked. "I had no time," he answered. "I spent every day singing." The Ants laughed at him. "If you were foolish enough to sing all summer," they said, "then you may dance all winter, and go to bed hungry."

Version A, with a promythion: *Whoever plays while there is work to do will go hungry when the work can no longer be done.* (Then the story.)

Version B, with an epimythion: (The story, then:) *Store up in the season of plenty, for the season of want is sure to come.*

Grading focus: This is a diagnostic week. Check that all three parts of the plot survive, that the two morals are worded differently yet both fit, and that the student wrote from the outline rather than copying. Mark at most three faults.

Week 2 • Expanding a Fable

Goals: Students expand a bare fable with speeches, a described setting and a slowed-down key moment, keeping the same story and moral. They learn the properties of nouns and diagram a direct object.

Background. Hermogenes shows the two ways to tell one fable (Kennedy, pp. 74–75). Briefly: the apes met to found a city, and an old ape warned that walls would only make them easier to catch. Expanded: one ape makes a speech about how happy men are in cities, with houses, assemblies and theaters, and the old ape answers with a speech of his own. Theon adds description: a fable grows when the characters say more and when the writer describes a river or some other setting (pp. 25–26). Townsend's "Dog and the Shadow" has a stream, a bridge and no speeches at all, so it is ideal for expanding.

Day 1 plan

Segment	Co-op (90 min)	Home (75 min)
Recitation	10 min. Each student recites the definition of a fable and reads Week 1's final copy. Name one strength in each.	5 min. Definition and final copy. Name one strength and at most one fix.
Model and narration	15 min. Read "The Dog and the Shadow" twice; narrate. Then read La Fontaine's verse "Grasshopper" aloud; let two students read it in turn.	10 min. Same; the student reads the poem aloud.
Teach the form	15 min. Tell Hermogenes' apes example both ways (background above). Students copy the three ways to expand.	10 min. Same.
Analyze	15 min. Questions 1–5. For question 5, list La Fontaine's additions on the board.	15 min. Same.
Grammar	15 min. Teach number, gender, person and case. Do exercise A, sentences 1 and 6, together.	15 min. Same.
Literature	15 min. Discussion below.	15 min. Same.
Assign	5 min.	5 min.

Analysis: expected answers

1. **Where the dog could speak.** To himself as he crosses the bridge; to the "other dog" in the water, demanding its meat; after the loss, to himself or to the stream.
2. **Setting.** The fable names a bridge, a stream and the water's reflection. Students could describe the weather, the sound and color of the water, the old bridge, the market the meat came from.
3. **Key moment.** The instant he lets go of his own meat to attack the reflection.

4. **Sample epimythions.** "Grasp at the shadow and you lose the substance." "Greed for more loses even what we have."
5. **La Fontaine's changes.** Rhyme and short lines; one ant instead of many; the grasshopper's offer to repay "double weight in the pound"; the narrator's aside that the ant is "little given to lend"; the ant's sharp question and witty last line. Verse makes the fable quicker, more comic and more pointed, and adds a narrator's voice. Note that he expanded the fable mainly through speeches, exactly as Hermogenes teaches.

Literature discussion (Bulfinch, Chapter II; Hesiod, *Theogony* 507–616)

1. **Prometheus.** Why did Prometheus steal fire, and why did Zeus punish mankind? Was Prometheus a benefactor or a thief?
2. **Pandora and Eve.** Both are the first woman, and both are tied to the coming of evil into the world. How do they differ? (*Aim: Hesiod's Pandora is sent as a punishment, a "beautiful evil"; Eve is made good, as a helper, and in Genesis the fault is shared and followed at once by a promise of redemption in Genesis 3:15.*)
3. **Hope.** In the story, what stays in the jar? What do you think the Greeks meant by that?

Days 2–4

- **Day 2.** The list of speaking verbs should say what feeling each shows. If a student lists *said* synonyms without feelings, send him back to add them.
- **Day 3.** Check the four requirements: description with two senses, two speeches, slowed key moment, epimythion. Students often over-expand the beginning and rush the key moment; point them back to the moment of letting go.
- **Day 4.** The checklist question to press: *Does every speech sound like a greedy dog?*
- **Parent check:** outline marked with three additions on Day 2; draft of 250–350 words on Day 3.

Dictation (Day 4):

A Dog, crossing a bridge over a stream with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own shadow in the water and took it for that of another Dog, with a piece of meat double his own in size.

Answer key

Style: verbs of speaking and vivid verbs (sample answers)

Instead of said	Feeling
growled, snarled	anger, threat
muttered, grumbled	discontent
boasted, bragged	pride
whispered	secrecy, fear
demanded	greed, impatience
pleaded, begged	need
sneered, scoffed	contempt
gasped	surprise
wept	grief
stammered	fear, confusion

Vivid verbs:

1. The dog **trotted** (swaggered, padded) across the bridge.
2. He **peered** (gazed, stared) at the water.
3. The other dog **clutched** (gripped) a larger piece of meat.
4. He **snatched** (seized, snapped up) the meat with his teeth.
5. The stream **swept** (whirled, carried) the meat away.

Grammar A: properties of nouns

#	Noun	Number	Gender	Case
1	dog	singular	masculine	nominative (subject)
2	meat	singular	neuter	objective (object of the preposition <i>of</i>)
3	dog's	singular	masculine	possessive
4	stream	singular	neuter	nominative (subject)
5	Dogs	plural	common	nominative (subject)
6	Dog	singular	masculine	nominative of direct address (second person)
7	reflection	singular	neuter	objective (object of the preposition <i>at</i>)
8	singer	singular	masculine	nominative (predicate nominative)

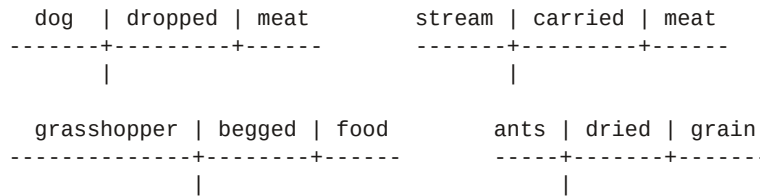
Notes: the dog is masculine because the fable calls him "he." In 8, *singer* is masculine because it renames the grasshopper, whom Townsend calls "he." All the nouns are third person except

Dog in sentence 6, which is spoken to.

Grammar B: plurals

foxes, wolves, sheep, oxen, mice, geese, flies, ants, deer, children

Grammar C: diagrams



His in sentence 1 and *the* in sentences 1–3 are modifiers; they will be added in Week 6.

Sample composition

The Dog and His Shadow (about 330 words)

At noon a butcher's Dog trotted away from the market with a thick piece of beef clamped in his jaws. He had stolen it while the butcher was arguing with a customer, and his tail swung proudly as he went. "The best piece on the whole table," he growled to himself through his teeth, "and all mine."

His way home led across an old wooden bridge over a stream. The planks were warm under his paws and creaked at every step. Below, the water ran slow and clear, green at the edges where the reeds grew, and so still in the middle that it held the sky like a mirror.

Halfway across, the Dog glanced down and stopped short. There in the water stood another dog, staring up at him, and in that dog's mouth was a piece of meat that looked twice as large as his own.

"You there!" he snarled. "That meat is too good for a mongrel like you. Hand it over, or I'll take it!"

The other dog only bared its teeth back at him.

That was enough. The Dog's eyes narrowed. His lips curled. He forgot the beef in his mouth, forgot the butcher, forgot everything but the bigger piece below. He opened his jaws wide to bark and sprang at the water.

His own meat dropped with a splash. The other dog broke into a hundred ripples and was gone. The current caught the beef, rolled it over once, and carried it under the bridge and out of sight.

The Dog scrambled up the bank, dripping and empty-mouthed, and stared at the stream until it was smooth again. There was the other dog once more, wet and foolish, with nothing in his mouth at all.

He who grasps at the shadow loses the substance.

Grading focus: Did the expansion keep the same story and moral? Are the speeches true to a greedy dog? Is the key moment slowed down more than the opening? Watch for description that wanders away from the action.
