

WRITING STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

FOR A PROTESTANT REFORMED SCHOOL

FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT REFORMED SCHOOL SOCIETIES



Writing Standards and Expectations for a Protestant Reformed School

Introduction:

In the summer of 2013, the TED committee began discussing the idea of updating A Writing Program for a Covenant Child the Federation produced in 1972. They decided to organize 12 teachers and hold a week long workshop during the summer of 2014 with the purpose of updating this document. During the course of preparing for this workshop, the TED committee postponed this workshop until the summer of 2015.

After discussion, it was decided that a more beneficial project would be the development of a set of Writing Standards and Expectations. This would be a separate document from the one produced in 1972. This wouldn't be a complete curriculum, rather, it would serve as a guideline as school's implement their own curriculum.

During the summer of 2015, the following teachers worked on the initial draft of this project:

K-2 nd	Joyce Holstege	(Heritage- Hudsonville)
	Sarah Ensink	(Adams)
0	Sarah Kortus	(Heritage- Hudsonville)
3 rd – 5 th	Dave Harbach	(Adams)
	Mike Feenstra	(PRCS-Dyer)
411 011	Kristi Thompson	(Eastside)
6 th – 8 th	Shaun Karsemeyer	(Hope-Redlands)
	Dan VanDyke	(Heritage- Hudsonville)
	Kyle Bruinooge	(CCHS)
9 th – 12 th	Jenn Knott	(CCHS)
	Liz Thompson	(CCHS)
	Trisha Haak	(CCHS)

During the summer of 2016, a smaller team of teachers was asked to complete a final draft of this document. This team was made up of Dan VanDyke, Liz Thompson, Kyle Bruinooge and Mike Feenstra. There work would become the final Writing Standards and Expectations for a Protestant Reformed School document approved by the Federation. We thank all the above people for their contributions to this project.



Purpose:

This document serves a valuable purpose. It guides the school administrator and teachers in the development of their own Writing curriculum. It lists standards and expectations for each level in the school. The administrator and teacher can easily check to see if the curriculum meets the standards and expectations set forth in this document by checking the appropriate box whenever a standard is achieved.

This document is not intended to be a packaged Writing curriculum. If an administrator or teacher uses it as such, they will be frustrated with its lack of details, specific language and materials. Rather, we encourage schools to use this document as they develop their own Writing program at their school.

Another fundamentally important feature of this document is that the standards and expectations are rooted in a Reformed worldview. This is what makes this set of standards and expectations unique and worthy for a Protestant Reformed school. We hope these standards will help produce god-glorifying writing in all our students. In this way, we are teaching our students to bring every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Rick Mingerink, executive director

Sept. 2016

Preface

Christian writing teachers are faced with the daunting task of training students to be not only Christian writers, but also Christian thinkers. God communicates clearly to His people through the written word; so must His people communicate to their fellow men with clear writing on a regular basis and in a variety of forms. The main purpose, then, of a Christian writing curriculum is to train students to express themselves as citizens of the kingdom of God, to reflect their eternal values and the true joy that they have as children of God. In the process, however, Christian teachers must also practically guide their students to build a foundation for college- and career-readiness.

These Reformed writing standards attempt to combine the eternal and practical purposes of a writing curriculum in an accessible format. To this end, the committee chose to use the Common Core Standards for Writing as the basis for our work. We recognize that there is valuable knowledge in the world and that we would be foolish to try to start from scratch when much work has already been done by those far more expert than we in the field of education. We also recognize the wisdom that other Reformed educators and ministers have expounded on the principles of writing instruction and therefore have incorporated much of that wisdom into these standards as well.

This document is set up as a checklist to show the progression of skills. Each point begins with an overarching standard statement (the numbered and bolded statements in the purple boxes). These statements define each Common Core standard as it applies in the Reformed classroom. Underneath the overarching statements, guidelines are laid out to show practically how each standard should be attained. The shaded boxes indicate the grade levels each guideline applies to, so that teachers can see at-a-glance how the skills should progress through the grade levels. Many are shaded for every grade; this is because many of these skills should be taught early and built upon with increasing complexity throughout each level.

Because these are *writing* standards only, grammar and reading are not addressed. However, it is important to note that reading, writing, and grammar must work together. Grammar and usage must be used as a tool to serve the art of writing and never as an end in themselves. Throughout their education, students should gain a deeper understanding of and delight in the variety, richness, and power of language and writing as a gift from God.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan VanDyke Liz Thompson Kyle Bruinooge Mike Feenstra

Grades K-2 Writing Standards

Write opinion pieces that show humility, an understanding of a basic Biblical worldview, and the use of reasonable evidence. Student will not use feelings and emotions as evidence but will ground his evidence in absolute reality while using a tone that exemplifies God's love (e.g., I like this book because Clifford is friendly).	К	1	2
a. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to tell a reader the topic or the name of the book and state an opinion or preference about that topic or book (e.g., My favorite food is pizza).			
b. Supply a reason for the opinion.			
c. Use linking words to connect opinions and reasons (e.g., because, and, also).			
d. Provide a concluding statement or section.			
e. Write informal types of perspective pieces, such as poetry, prayers, and letters, employing tact and kindness.			

Write informative and explanatory texts that organize and accurately present ideas and information in an objective manner while maintaining a scriptural foundation of truth. Express truths about God and His world in a reverent manner.	К	1	2
a. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to name a topic and supply information about the topic.			
b. Use facts and definitions to develop sub-topics.			
c. Provide a concluding statement or section.			

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, which are either explicitly or implicitly consistent with a Reformed Christian walk of life. These stories should use effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	К	1	2
Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate an event or series of events in the order in which they occurred.			
b. Respond to stories with a maturing faith.			
c. Include two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, and provide some sense of closure.			
d. Use temporal words to signal event order (e.g., later, then, the next day).			
e. Include additional details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.			
f. Write other types of narrative pieces, such as journal entries or retelling of Bible stories, other stories, or narrative poems.			

4	4. Produce writing in various genres that clearly communicates to an audience the realities of God and/or His world.	К	1	2	
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5. Develop and strengthen writing through the process of planning, receiving feedback, revising, and editing in order to use words effectively, show the orderliness of language, and produce quality, God-honoring work. Exhibit Christian humility and patience throughout this process.	К	1	2
With covenantal guidance from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.			
b. Use feedback and revision to focus more clearly on the topic.			
c. Use the writing process to revise and edit drafts.			

Use technology honestly to produce and publish writing. Additionally, use technology to interact and collaborate with others in a loving and encouraging manner, cultivating the body of Christ.	К	1	2
a. With covenant nurture from supportive adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing.			
b. Begin developing keyboard skills.			
c. Collaborate with peers using technology.			

7	 Conduct short research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject and a desire to search diligently for the truth of the matter. Participate in shared research and writing projects which increase in complexity. 	К	1	2	
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8. Gather relevant information from various sources and integrate the information honestly and resposibly while avoiding plagiarism.	К	1	2
a. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.			
b. Attribute information to specific sources.			
c. With covenantal guidance from adults, discern the credibility of the source.			

9. Draw evidence from Scripture or from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research while maintaining a Biblical perspective.	К	1	2	
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	te routinely over various time frames to communicate thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs for a variety asks, purposes, and audiences.	К	1	2	
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Grades 3-5 Writing Standards

Write opinion pieces that show humility, an understanding of a basic Biblical worldview, and the use of reasonable evidence. Student will not use feelings and emotions as evidence but will ground his evidence in absolute reality while using a tone that exemplifies God's love.	3	4	5
a. Introduce a topic or text clearly and provide reasons that support the opinion.			
b. Create an organizational structure.			
c. Group related ideas and support all reasons with facts and details.			
d. Logically group ideas and intentionally order reasons.			
e. Use linking words and phrases to connect opinions and reasons (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition to, because, consequently, therefore).			
f. Provide a concluding statement or section.			
g. Write informal types of perspective pieces, such as poetry, prayers, and letters, employing tact and kindness.			

2. Write informative and explanatory texts that organize and accurately present ideas and information in an objective manner while maintaining a scriptural foundation of truth. Logically organize these ideas and information to show the orderliness of God. Express truths about God and His world in a reverent manner.	3	4	5
Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aid comprehension.			
b. Use paragraphs and sections including formatting and multimedia.			
c. Group related information logically to maintain a focus.			
d. Develop a topic with facts, definitions, and details.			
Also develop the topic with quotations, examples, and other types of support related to the topic.			
f. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.			
g. Link ideas across categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., <i>another, for example, also, because</i>).			
h. Use precise language (e.g., g <i>alloped</i> instead of went or moved).			
i. Use domain specific vocabulary (e.g., <i>muzzle</i> instead of <i>nose</i> in an essay on horses).			
j. Provide a concluding statement or section.			

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, which are either explicitly or implicitly consistent with a Reformed Christian walk of life. These stories should use effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	3	4	5
Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.			
b. Orient the reader with a well-crafted exposition.			
c. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events and/or to show the response of characters to situations.			
d. Intentionally pace the narrative with well-timed suspense.			
Use transitional words, phrases, and clauses to signal event order and manage the sequence of events.			
f. Use concrete words and phrases. (e.g., specific nouns and verbs like <i>daffodil</i> instead of <i>flower</i> or <i>murmured</i> instead of <i>said</i>).			
g. Use sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely. (e.g., her fingers tingled).			
h. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.			

Produce writing in various genres that communicates to a specific audience for a specific purpose the realities of God and/or His world. Demonstrate a loving and selfless consideration of the unique perspective and experiences of the intended audience.	3	4	5	
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 Develop and strengthen writing through the process of planning, receiving feedback, revising, and editing in order to use words effectively, show the orderliness of language, and produce quality, God-honoring work. Exhibit Christian humility and patience throughout this process. 	3	4	5
With covenantal guidance from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.			
b. Use feedback and revision to focus more clearly on the topic.			
c. Revise for content. Edit using grammatical conventions to serve the clarity and correctness of the writing.			
d. Try a new approach and rewrite as needed.			

Use technology honestly to produce and publish writing. Additionally, use technology to interact and collaborate with others in a loving and encouraging manner, cultivating the body of Christ.	3	4	5
 With covenant nurture from supportive adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills). 			
 b. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others. 			
Demonstrate sufficient persistence and command of keyboarding skills to type approximately one page in a single sitting.			
Demonstrate sufficient persistence and command of keyboarding skills to type approximately two pages in a single sitting.			

7. Conduct short research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject and a desire to search diligently for the truth of the matter.	3	4	5
a. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.			
b. Investigate different aspects of the topic.			
c. Compare, evaluate, and use several sources.			

8. Gather relevant information from various sources and integrate the information honestly and responsibly while avoiding plagiarism. Assess the accuracy and credibility of the source, discerning the value of academic excellence found in both religious and secular sources.	3	4	5
a. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources.			
b. Take notes on sources and categorize information.			
c. Provide a list of sources.			
d. Reword, summarize, or paraphrase information in notes and finished work.			
With covenant guidance from adults, develop strategies for discerning the credibility of the sources.			

9. Draw evidence from Scripture or from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research while maintaining a Biblical perspective. Use and apply any reading skills developed through the school's literature curriculum. For example, describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.	1 3	4	5	
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10. Write routinely over various time frames to communicate thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences.	3	4	5
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Grades 6-8 Writing Standards

Write opinion pieces composed of arguments that show humility, a maturing Biblical worldview, and the use of reasonable evidence. Student will not use feelings and emotions as evidence but will ground his evidence in absolute reality while using a tone that exemplifies God's love.	6	7	8
Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.			
b. Acknowledge and distinguish alternate or opposing claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence logically.			
c. Use logical reasoning and accurate sources.			
d. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.			
e. In addition, use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, and evidence, and to develop a cohesive whole with a focused purpose.			
f. Establish and maintain a formal style.			
g. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.			

Write informative and explanatory texts that organize and accurately present ideas and information in an objective manner while maintaining a scriptural foundation of truth. Logically organize these ideas and information to show the orderliness of God. Express truths about God and His world in a reverent manner.	6	7	8
 a. Introduce a topic clearly; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension. 			
b. In the introductory section, preview what is to follow through a clear thesis statement.			
 Develop the topic with intentionally-chosen relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples to support the purpose of the text. 			
d. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.			
e. Create cohesion with transitions.			
f. Use a variety of transitions.			
g. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.			
h. Establish and maintain a formal style.			
Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.			

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, which are either explicitly or implicitly consistent with a Reformed Christian walk of life. Through the creation of narratives, demonstrate empathy for those whose perspective and/or experiences are different than the author's. These stories should use effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	6	7	8
Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context early and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.			
b. Establish point of view early.			
c. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.			
d. Use a variety of transitions, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.			
e. Show the relationships among experiences and events.			
f. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events (Show; don't tell).			
g. Provide the reader with a sense of closure appropriate to the story's purpose.			

according to prescribed parameters, out of a trust and respect for the authority and wisdom of the teacher. Produce writing in various genres that communicates to a specific audience for a specific purpose the realities of God and/or His world. Demonstrate a loving and selfless consideration of the unique perspective and experiences of the intended audience.
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5. Develop and strengthen writing through the process of planning, receiving feedback, revising, and editing in order to use words effectively, show the orderliness of langua and produce quality, God-honoring work. Exhibit Christian humility and patience throughout this process.	^{ge,} 6	7	8
With loving and respectful guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strewriting as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. Use feedback and revision to focus more clearly on the topic.	_		
b. Using this support and guidance, focus on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.			
Revise for content. Edit using grammatical conventions to serve the clarity and correctne the writing.	ess of		

Use technology honestly to produce and publish writing. Additionally, use technology to interact and collaborate with others in a loving and encouraging manner, cultivating the body of Christ.	6	7	8
With covenant nurture from supportive adults, use a variety of digital tools, including the Internet to produce and publish writing.			
b. Demonstrate sufficient persistence and command of keyboarding skills to type approximately three pages in a single sitting.			
c. Link to and cite sources.			

7. Conduct short as well as sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject and a desire to search diligently for the truth of the matter.	6	7	8
Conduct research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.			
b. Create a self-generated question to give purpose to the research.			
c. Generate additional related focused questions for further research.			
d. Generate additional related focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration; i.e., examine other angles to the original question.			

Gather relevant information from various sources and integrate the information honestly and responsibly while avoiding plagiarism. Assess the accuracy and credibility of the source, discerning the value of academic excellence found in both religious and secular sources.	6	7	8
a. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources. Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.			
b. Use search terms effectively.			
c. Quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism.			
d. Provide basic bibliographic information for sources.			
e. Follow a standard format for citation.			

9. Draw evidence from Scripture or from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research while maintaining a Biblical perspective. Use and apply any reading skills developed through the school's literature curriculum. For example, compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.	6	7	8	
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10. Write routinely over various time frames to communicate ideas, knowledge, and beliefs for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Write to develop into well-rounded Christian writers and thinkers.

Grades 9-12 Writing Standards

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts. These arguments must show humility, a maturing biblical worldview, and the use of valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Student will demonstrate an understanding of the distinction between a subjective opinion and the objective evidence needed to support it; he will ground evidence in absolute reality while using a tone that exemplifies God's love.	9-10	11-12
a. Introduce precise and knowledgeable claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claim(s), and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.		
b. Create an organization that also logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.		
c. Establish the significance of the claim(s).		
d. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.		
e. Develop the claim(s) and counterclaims thoroughly.		
f. Supply the most relevant evidence.		
g. Anticipate the audience's values and possible biases.		
h. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.		
 i. Also use varied syntax (i.e., use a variety of sentence structures) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, etc. 		
 j. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which he is writing. 		
k. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.		

2. Write informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately while maintaining a scriptural foundation of truth. Logically select, organize, and analyze these ideas and information to show the orderliness of God. Express truths about God and His world in a reverent manner.	9-10	11-12
Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting, graphics, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.		
b. Create a unified whole by structuring each new element to build on those that precede it.		
c. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.		
d. Choose the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, etc., to develop the topic thoroughly.		
Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.		
f. Also use appropriate and varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, etc.		
g. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.		
h. Use creative techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy.		
Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which he is writing.		
 j. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented. 		

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, which are either explicitly or implicitly consistent with a Reformed Christian walk of life. Through the creation of narratives, demonstrate empathy for those whose perspectives and/or experiences are different than the author's. These stories should use effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	9-10	11-12
Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.		
b. Convey the significance behind the narrative.		
c. Use narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines) to develop experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.		
d. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.		
e. Build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).		
f. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.		
g. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.		

4. Demonstrate a conscientious diligence for completing the task the way it should be done, according to prescribed parameters, out of a trust and respect for the authority and wisdom of the teacher. Produce writing in various genres which communicates to a specific audience for a specific purpose the realities of God and/or His world. Boldly communicate while demonstrating a loving, wise, and selfless consideration of the unique perspective and experiences of the intended audience.	9-10	11-12
5. Produce quality, God-honoring work, which is characterized by the orderliness of language, through the steps of the writing process (i.e., planning, giving and receiving feedback, revising, editing, trying a new approach). Use words and grammatical conventions precisely, effectively, and correctly. Exhibit Christian humility and patience throughout this process.	9-10	11-12

9-10

11-12

6. Use technology honestly to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing projects. Interact and collaborate with others in a loving and encouraging manner, cultivating the body of Christ. Take advantage

of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

7. Conduct short as well as sustained research projects to answer focused questions or solve a problem. Narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate and synthesize multiple sources on the subject. Demonstrate an understanding of the subject and a desire to search diligently for the truth of the matter in order to write with integrity.	9-10	11-12
8. Gather relevant information from various authoritative sources. Selectively integrate the information honestly and responsibly to maintain the flow of ideas. Assess the accuracy and credibility of the source, discerning the value of academic excellence found in both religious and secular sources. Avoid plagiarism and follow a standard format for citation.	9-10	11-12

11-12

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9. Draw evidence from Scripture or from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research while maintaining a Biblical perspective. Use and apply any reading skills developed through the

literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes.

school's literature curriculum. For example, demonstrate knowledge of foundational work of American

10. Write routinely over various time frames to communicate ideas, knowledge, and beliefs for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Write to develop into well-rounded Christian writers and thinkers who are able and willing to communicate a solidly Reformed worldview.	9-10	11-12
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