

WRITE IT FOR ME

GRADES

kindergarten and first

MATERIALS

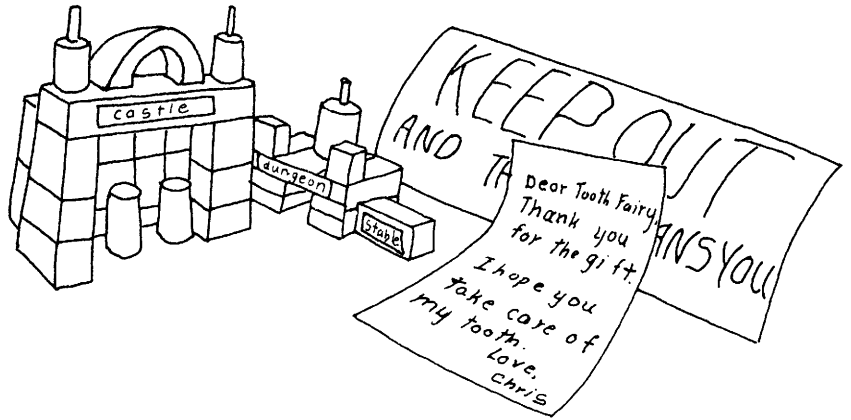
paper

pencil

At the age of four, little George Orwell dictated a poem to his mom. The great literary critic Edmund Wilson began his writing career by dictating stories to his admiring aunt. The child as tiny author dictating precious words to an adoring adult is, I suspect, a scene that takes place at the start of many famous writers' luminous careers.

Over the years, I have taken such dictation from dozens of budding writers, and in every case I have been pleased with the results. They dictate; I scribble down what they say; and by the end, they have established a relation between themselves and words on paper. And they are pleased with themselves, as they should be.

Taking dictation from a child is a very simple activity. You can record your child's stories and poems in the Orwell-Wilson tradition. Or you can take less formal dictations. You can help a child write KEEP OUT—AND THAT MEANS YOU signs, a written request for a later bedtime, thank-you cards to the tooth fairy, and labels for elaborate block buildings.



You can help your child add items to your weekly grocery list, write lists of complaints to an annoying older sister, and compose a birthday card for a special uncle. Your child will be the author of all these works, even without doing the physical work of writing. And, as Mother Orwell or Aunt Wilson could confirm, you never know where such writing will lead.