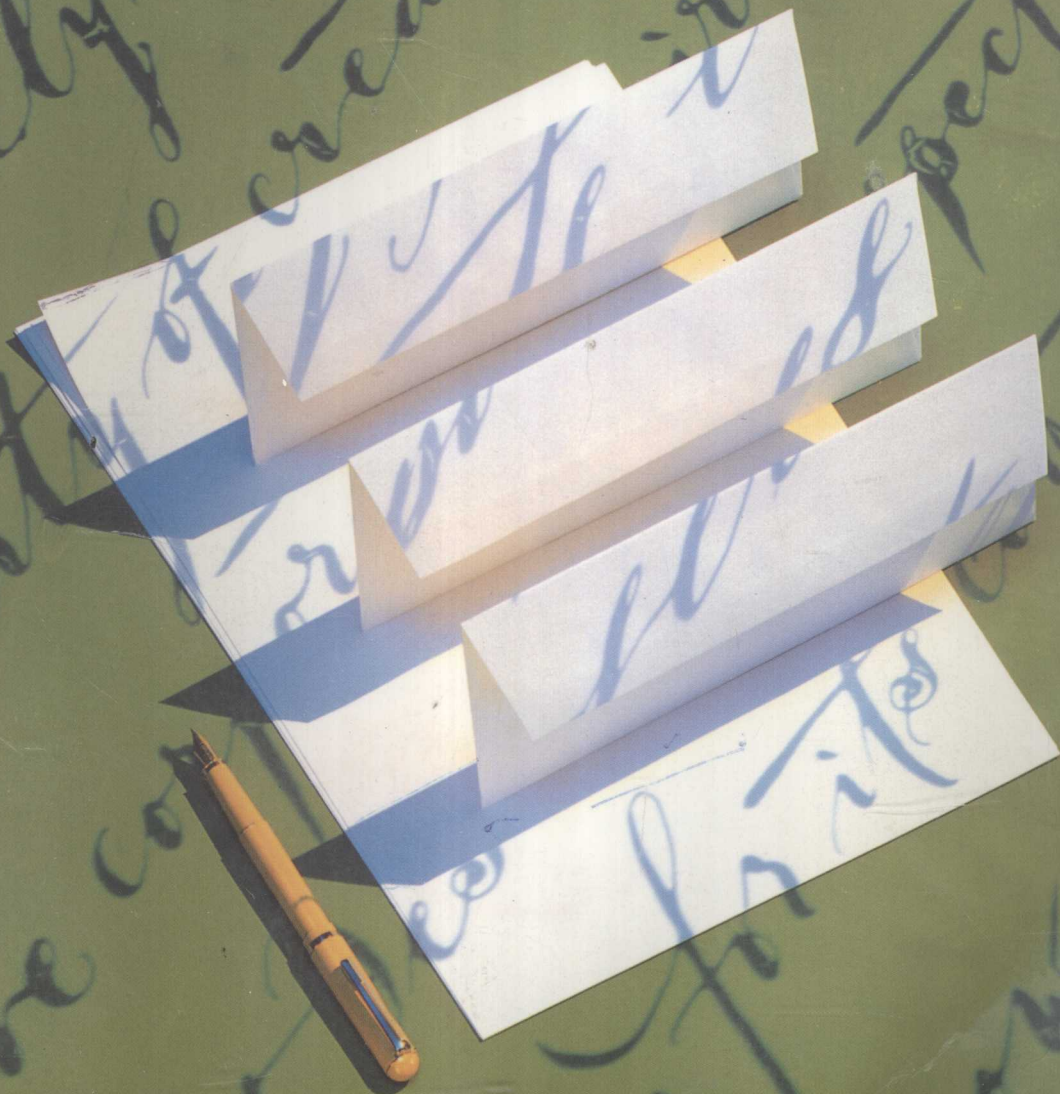


INVOLVED

WRITING FOR COLLEGE • WRITING FOR YOUR SELF



CHARLES BAZERMAN

Involved

Writing for College, Writing for Your Self

Charles Bazerman

University of California — Santa Barbara



10/9/22

Houghton Mifflin Company

Boston New York

Sponsoring Editor: Jayne Fagnoli
Basic Book Editor: Martha Bustin
Senior Project Editor: Susan Westendorf
Senior Production/Design Coordinator: Jill Haber
Senior Manufacturing Coordinator: Priscilla Bailey
Marketing Manager: Nancy Lyman

Cover design: Mark Caleb

Cover image: Words superimposed over writing paper; envelopes and pen, Tony Stone images.

Text and Photo Credits begin on page 365.



As part of Houghton Mifflin's ongoing commitment to the environment, this text has been printed on recycled paper.

Copyright © 1997 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of Houghton Mifflin Company unless such copying is expressly permitted by federal copyright law. Address inquiries to College Permissions, Houghton Mifflin Company, 222 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116-3764.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 96-76862

Student Edition ISBN: 0-395-67182-5

Exam Copy ISBN: 0-395-67183-3

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9—BH—00 99 98 97

PREFACE

For most students, college is a new world. Students meet new kinds of people, engage in new kinds of discussions, read new kinds of books, and are asked to write new kinds of essays. Those who are drawn into this new world, who find questions and knowledge that excite them, who relate to the readings, who express their thoughts and learning—they succeed at college and get the most out of it. Those who have trouble communicating within this academic world and cannot connect its goals with their own—they often struggle and do not get from college all that they had hoped.

Whether college becomes an exciting environment or an alien one depends to a great extent on the mastering of college-level reading and writing, because texts are central to the life of the university. In college, students must absorb information of increasing sophistication from a range of reading materials. They are expected to think about, synthesize, and critique these materials and to use their knowledge to understand and investigate the world. Students, ultimately, are in college to become complex and knowledgeable participants in the world, able to articulate and argue their insights in effective writing.

These are tough demands that depend on students becoming deeply involved with their subject matters. Only that personal involvement can provide sufficient motivation to do the kind of disciplined work that allows one to get the most from college. Involvement is not a matter of luck, as many students may think. It is built through every act of reading and writing. Involvement increases every time a student finds some personally valuable meaning in a reading assignment, finds a class assignment stimulating, or a writing assignment to be an opportunity to develop thought. Involvement increases every time a student states his or her ideas forcefully enough to get a serious response from teachers and other students. Involvement increases whenever a student notices his or her reading, writing, and thinking going to a new level.

Involved: Writing for College, Writing for Your Self helps students to understand their college experience as a way of advancing their own personal concerns and to draw substance from their reading and writing assignments. By enabling students to understand what it is they are being asked to write—from basic to complex communications—and how they can go about fulfilling those tasks meaningfully and successfully, *Involved: Writing for College, Writing for Your Self* helps students to develop themselves in all the ways the university offers.

❧ Distinctive Features of *Involved: Writing for College, Writing for Your Self*

- **The Involvement theme helps students to be active participants in their college education.** *Involved* encourages students to take responsibility for learning, to connect college and college writing to their personal concerns and development, and to recognize their own stakes and local opportunities. It approaches involvement, a key component in success, as something one builds through acts of careful reading and writing, through the finding of personal meaning in assigned work, and through the sharing of ideas with teachers and others.
- **Many examples of student writing appear in the book.** Student writing is carefully built into the chapters, exemplifying and reinforcing the writing tasks taught in the book. Questions entitled “Thinking About Student Writing” follow each example; they create a context in which student writing is taken seriously and foster analytical skills that the student then applies to his or her own writing.
- **Realistic readings and assignments teach critical thinking and college-level reading skills.** *Involved* approaches college as a unique rhetorical context, with distinctive agendas and expectations. The readings and assignments are intensely practical, directly tailored to the types of reading, writing, and class styles that students actually encounter. Integrated readings are drawn from a range of disciplines and from accessible, yet college-level articles, books, and textbooks.
- **The writing process is presented in an innovative way.** While speaking to the recognized needs of students and the familiar concerns of first-year writing, *Involved* presents the writing process not as a monolithic one-style-fits-all entity, but as a series of personal and social processes relating to the situation, the task, and the writer. It explores both how writing processes vary according to the situation and how some parts often recur.
- **Instruction focuses on writing tasks typical of the academy.** *Involved* aims to be highly practical for the college student, and thus concentrates on reading journals, summaries, essay exams, illustrative writing, autobiographical and reflective writing, analytical writing, investigative writing (library, field, and lab research), case studies, and argument.
- **A unique final part on “Dealing with Complexity” addresses a crucial need.** Chapters in this part treat “Writing About Complex Worlds,” “Writing About Problem Cases,” and “Arguing Your Case.”
- **Sidebars integrate rhetorical concepts, research findings, and localized examination of the writing process into the discussion.** The text features three types of sidebars: (1) Useful Concepts from Rhetoric; (2) News from the Field; and (3) Reviewing Writing Processes.

- *Involved* covers relevant, up-to-date topics such as electronic discussion groups, the Web, memory techniques, and privacy issues. Activities entitled “Getting Involved Electronically” also appear at the end of the chapters.
- *Involved* incorporates the best of current research and theory. Many people in the composition field recognize that freshman textbooks have lagged behind the latest developments of composition theory and research. This book combines a concern for process with a sociocultural perspective, which helps students understand their personal position, stake, and goals in writing. Its goal is to help students develop a reflexive understanding of their college situation and their activity in college so that they can become more focused agents. *Involved* provides students with a reflective frame for their college experience so they can understand the communicative situations they are in. Students learn to see the classroom and the disciplines as “discourse communities” in which they can become active participants for their own benefit.
- *Instructor’s Resource Manual* provides a wealth of supporting material. The 150-page manual moves chapter-by-chapter with
 - Chapter Goals
 - Some Potential Student Difficulties and How to Address Them
 - Some Useful Roles for the Instructor
 - Changing Classroom Relations
 - Providing Support for and Responding to Assignments
 - Further Related Activities and Discussion Topics
 - Working with the “Getting Involved Electronically” Activities
 It also contains five essays:
 - What’s Interesting?
 - Where Is the Classroom?
 - The Life of Genre and the Life of the Classroom (a review of the literature)
 - Students Being Disciplined (a review of the literature)
 - The Classroom as a Communication System
- The Dictionary Deal is offered with *Involved*. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (complete/concise) can be shrinkwrapped with the text at a substantial savings.

Acknowledgments

First and most profoundly, I must thank the many students I have had the privilege of teaching over the years. In their struggles to write with meaning

in their lives, they have shown me how difficult and how important writing is to living in the modern world. I also thank the many teachers of writing whose dedication has buoyed me and whose insights have opened my eyes. Finally, I thank the editors and sales representatives for Houghton Mifflin who for twenty years have taught me how to reach the classroom with books that serve the needs of students.

For this particular book, I have enjoyed the perceptive criticism of my consultants: Carol Berkenkotter of Michigan Technological University, Susan MacLeod of Washington State University, David Russell of Iowa State University, and Barbara Walvoord of the University of Cincinnati. In addition, the following colleagues served as valuable reviewers, offering helpful advice, ideas, and suggestions:

Marshall Alcorn, George Washington University (DC)
Wendy Bishop, Florida State University
Jo Ann Bomze, Beaver College (PA)
Patsy Callaghan, Central Washington University (WA)
Elaine P. Maimon, Queens College, CUNY (NY)
Douglas Richards, Keuka College (NY)
Duane H. Roen, Arizona State University
Lucille Schultz, University of Cincinnati
Kristin Snoddy, Indiana University, Kokomo
Molly Travis, Tulane University
Arthur Walzer, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Steven Weisenburger, University of Kentucky
Irwin Weiser, Purdue University (IN)

I have also enjoyed the help and constructive wrangling of my editor, Martha Bustin, and the efficient and skillful help of my assistant, Michael Austin.

My son, Gershom Bazerman, I thank for his wisecracks, and my partner, Shirley Geoklin Lim, I thank for her wise comments.

Charles Bazerman
University of California—Santa Barbara

BRIEF TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part One Writing Your Self into College 1

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|----|
| Chapter 1 | Strategic Writing | 2 |
| Chapter 2 | The Classroom Situation | 20 |
| Chapter 3 | Writing Processes | 44 |

Part Two Thriving in the Classroom 71

- | | | |
|------------------|--|-----|
| Chapter 4 | Journals and Reflective Writing | 72 |
| Chapter 5 | Notes and Summaries: Writing to Remember | 94 |
| Chapter 6 | Exam Writing: Displaying Knowledge | 123 |

Part Three Using Concepts to View the World 151

- | | | |
|------------------|--|-----|
| Chapter 7 | Illustrative Writing: Connecting Concepts and Real Examples | 152 |
| Chapter 8 | Autobiographical Writing: Connecting Concepts and Experience | 166 |
| Chapter 9 | Analytical Writing: Looking Closely | 192 |

Part Four Investigating 219

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Chapter 10 | The Investigative Process | 220 |
| Chapter 11 | Investigating the Archive: Library Research Writing | 228 |
| Chapter 12 | New Investigations: Fieldwork and Laboratories | 254 |

Part Five Dealing with Complexity 279

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-----|
| Chapter 13 | Writing About Complex Worlds | 280 |
| Chapter 14 | Writing About Problem Cases | 316 |
| Chapter 15 | Arguing Your Case | 343 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface xi

PART ONE

Writing Your Self into College 1

I

Strategic Writing 2

A First-Day Assignment	3
Writing as Rhetoric	4
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	6
Rhetorical Situations	6
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	7
The Origins of Rhetoric	7
USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: TOC	8
USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:	
<i>The Types of Rhetoric</i>	9
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	9
Rhetoric in a Changing World: Literacy, Specialization, and Technology	10
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	12
Rhetoric and Decorum in Daily Life	12
USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:	
<i>Decorum</i>	13
The Strategy of Growth	14
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	15
Becoming Involved Through Writing	15
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	17
NEWS FROM THE FIELD: <i>What Difference Does College Make?</i>	17
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	18
<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	19

2

The Classroom Situation 20

Sizing Up a Class Instead of Psyching Out the Teacher	22
NEWS FROM THE FIELD: <i>One Freshman's Struggle</i>	22
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	24
Writing Is Open-Ended	24
Writing Your Self into College	25
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	26
Classrooms as Communication Systems	26
The Communication Systems of Three Classes	27
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	29
USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:	
<i>Dramatism</i>	29
The Teacher's Role in Classroom Communications	32
Textbooks	32
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	33
Other Readings and Resources	33
Interacting with the Written Material	34
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	35
How the Instructor Shapes What Happens in Class	36
<i>Lectures and Active Listening</i>	36
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	37
<i>Discussion</i>	38
<i>Writing for Reflection</i>	39

The Student's Role in Classroom Communications 39

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Task Representation* 40

Being on the Spot 41

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:
Rhetorical Situation and Rhetorical Timing 42
Writing for Reflection 43
Getting Involved Electronically 43

3 Writing Processes 44

An Author's Confession 45

Trusting the Process 45

The Variety of Processes 46

Processes for Different Kinds of Assignments 47

Some Common Processes of Writing 47

Unfolding Situations 48
Putting Your Goals and the Task in Focus 48
Developing Ideas 49
Finding and Gathering Resources 49
Thinking Through Your Materials 50
Planning and Organizing Your Statement 50
Producing Text 50
Making Your Sources Explicit 51
Examining and Improving Text 51
Receiving Responses and Moving On to the Next Statement 52

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: TOC 53

The Processes of One Classroom Writing Assignment: A Case Study 53

The Course Unfolds 54
The Paper Is Assigned 55
The Writing Moves into Focus 59
Thinking Seriously 61
Planning 63
Writing the Paper Up 64
The Process Continues 68
Thinking About Student Writing 68
Writing for Reflection 69
Getting Involved Electronically 70

PART TWO

Thriving in the Classroom 71

4

Journals and Reflective Writing 72

A Rich and Confusing Environment 73

Using Writing for Reflection 74

Journal Writing 74

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Invention* 75

Three Students' Reading Journals 76

Journal Entry 1 (Finding the Meaning of the Text) 77

Journal Entry 2 (Philosophical Interpretation) 78

Journal Entry 3 (Personal Response) 79
Thinking About Student Writing 80

Guidelines for Journals 81

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: *Richard Rodriguez's Reading Journal* 83

ASSIGNMENTS: *Journals for Yourself, Journals for Your Courses* 84

Electronic Discussion Groups 89

Local Area Networks and Class Discussions 90

Electronic Links 91

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: *Brief Guide to Netiquette* 92

The Reflective and Reflected Self 93

Getting Involved Electronically 93

5

Notes and Summaries: Writing to Remember 94

Methods for Remembering 96

Writing for Reflection 98

EXERCISES: *Remembering* 99

Some Ways to Represent Knowledge to Your Self 103

Rewriting Notes in Various Formats 103
Personal Summary Statements 106
 REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Writing Summaries for Your Self* 107
Student Sample 107
Thinking About Student Writing 108
 EXERCISES: *Representing Knowledge* 109

Overview Summaries 110

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Revealing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism* 112

Questions and Answers 114

Study Groups 116

EXERCISES: *Writing and Remembering* 117
Getting Involved Electronically 122

6 Exam Writing: Displaying Knowledge 123

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: *Goal-Setting Research* 125

Short-Answer Examinations 126

Writing for Reflection 127

Summary Questions 127

Thinking About Student Writing 129

Writing Summaries for Others 129

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: *Sentence Combining* 130

EXERCISES: *Sentence Combining* 133

Questions Requiring Reorganization 134

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: *Key Question Words* 136

Responding to Essay Exam Questions: A Review 139

ASSIGNMENTS: *Asking and Answering Questions* 140

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Proofreading* 145

Questions for At-Home Essays 146

Beyond Classroom Learning 148

ASSIGNMENTS: *Goals and Summary Writing* 149
Getting Involved Electronically 150

PART THREE

Using Concepts to View the World 151

7

Illustrative Writing: Connecting Concepts and Real Examples 152

Snapshots of the World 153

Representations of the World 154

ASSIGNMENTS: *Finding Real-Life Examples* 156

Writing Papers About Real-Life

Situations 156

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Revision and Drafting* 158

Sample Student Essay 159

Thinking About Student Writing 163

ASSIGNMENTS: *Writing About Real-Life Situations* 163

Getting Involved Electronically 165

8

Autobiographical Writing: Connecting Concepts and Experience 166

Personal Issues and Privacy 167

Sharing in the Classroom 168

ASSIGNMENTS: *Using Reading to Think About Your Life* 169

NEWS FROM THE FIELD: *Intrinsic Motivation and Doing Something for Its Own Sake* 172

Two Kinds of Personal Experience Paper 173

Experience as Illustration 174

Developing a Personal Illustration 174
Writing an Essay of Personal Illustration 175

Sample Student Essay 175

Thinking About Student Writing 178

ASSIGNMENTS: *Essays of Personal Illustration* 179

From Illustration to Discussion 181

Comparing Everyday and Disciplinary Thinking 181

Developing a Comparison of Everyday and Disciplinary Thinking 183

Writing an Essay Comparing Everyday and Disciplinary Thinking 184

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Editing* 184

Sample Student Essay 186

Thinking About Student Writing 190

ASSIGNMENTS: *Comparing Everyday and Disciplinary Thinking* 190

Getting Involved Electronically 191

9

Analytical Writing: Looking Closely 192

Analytical Insight 193

Some Key Features of Analysis 193

Analysis in the Classroom 196

ASSIGNMENTS: *Analyzing Analyses* 197

Analysis and Your Authority 204

Skillful Practice Is More Than a Set of Rules 205

Computer Tools and Analysis 205

ASSIGNMENTS: *Writing for Reflection* 206

REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: *Planning to Write* 206

Writing and Analyzing 207

General Procedures for Analysis 208

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:
Genre 209

Writing an Analytical Essay 210

Sample Analyses from Different Disciplines 211

Literature: An Analysis of Gender in a Pop Song (Claire Richards) 211

Chemistry: An Analysis of What Happens When Metal Corrodes (Andrew Mancey) 212

Business: An Analysis of a Marketing Research Report (Ken Fuscolini) 212

Earth Sciences: An Analysis of an Earthquake (Patrice Ferrin) 212

Political Science: An Analysis of Prayer in School: Constitutional Rights in Conflict (Andre D'Onville) 213

Thinking About Student Writing 214

ASSIGNMENTS: *Analysis* 215

Getting Involved Electronically 216

PART FOUR

Investigating 219

10

The Investigative Process 220

The Three Sites of Investigation: Library, Field, and Laboratory 221

The Library 222

The Field 222

The Laboratory 223

Investigative Work in Courses 223

Issues in Investigation 224

The Basic Problem or Question 224

The Focusing or Specifying Question 224

The Investigative Site 225

The Investigative Design: Concepts, Questions, Method 225

The Investigative Report 226

Getting Involved Electronically 227

11

Investigating the Archive: Library Research Writing 228

An Interactive Discovery Process 229

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC:
Intertextuality 231

Directing Your Research	232	Reporting Fieldwork	258
<i>The Basic Problem or Question</i>	232	Report of a Professional Field Study	260
<i>The Focusing or Specifying Question and the Investigative Site</i>	232	Sample Student Field Report	262
<i>The Investigative Design: Concepts, Questions, Method</i>	233	Thinking About Student Writing	265
<i>The Investigative Report</i>	233	ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Doing Fieldwork</i>	265
Using the Library in the Electronic Age	234	Experiments: Events Created to Be Observed	267
<i>Some Commonly Used Indexes</i>	236	USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: <i>The Three Moves in Research Article Introductions</i>	269
ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Getting Oriented to Your Library</i>	238	Laboratory Courses	271
Evaluating What You Find	238	The Four Stories of the Experimental Report	271
<i>Primary and Secondary Sources</i>	238	NEWS FROM THE FIELD: <i>A Social Experiment Inside Mental Hospitals</i>	272
<i>Reliable Information Sources and Individual Statement Sources</i>	239	A Sample Student Experiment	274
REVIEWING WRITING PROCESSES: <i>Referring to Your Sources</i>	240	<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	277
Giving Credit in Modern Language Association (MLA) Style	242	ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Understanding Experiments</i>	277
<i>In-Text Parenthetical References</i>	242	<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	278
<i>Basic MLA Bibliography Punctuation</i>	244		
<i>Modifications and Special Situations</i>	245		
Giving Credit in American Psychological Association (APA) Style	246		
<i>In-Text Parenthetical References</i>	246		
<i>Basic APA Bibliography Punctuation</i>	247		
Sample Student Paper	248		
<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	252		
ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Library Research</i>	252		
<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	253		
12	New Investigations: Fieldwork and Laboratories 254	PART FIVE	Dealing with Complexity 279
Getting the Story in the Field	255	13	Writing About Complex Worlds 280
<i>The Importance of the Fundamental Question or Problem</i>	256		
<i>Finding a Site for Fieldwork</i>	257	NEWS FROM THE FIELD: <i>The Simple Paper Clip Isn't So Simple</i>	282
<i>Concept, Method, and Planning</i>	257	Complexity Presented to You and Complexity You Find	284
<i>Record Keeping</i>	258	ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Reading About Complexity</i>	286
<i>Analyzing Fieldwork</i>	258	Complexity from Multiple Perspectives	291
		Facing Complexity	293
		Two Kinds of Complexity	294
		<i>Assignment 1: A Complex Event</i>	295
		Sample Student Essay	296
		<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	300
		ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Describing Complexity</i>	300
		<i>Assignment 2: An Open Question</i>	300
		USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: <i>Stasis, Where Disagreements Meet</i>	302

Sample Student Essay	303
<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	307
ASSIGNMENT: <i>Writing About Open Questions</i>	307
<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	315

14

Writing About Problem Cases 316

Writing and Problems	321
Steps in Solving Problems	322
<i>Formulating the Problem</i>	322
<i>Searching for the Form of an Answer</i>	323
<i>Becoming Aware of the Facts and Using Them</i>	323
<i>From Facts to a Plan</i>	324
<i>Writing Up the Presentation</i>	324
Sample Student Problem Solutions	326
<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	329
ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Solving Case Problems</i>	329
<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	342

15

Arguing Your Case 343

Plenty to Say	344
Complexity of Beliefs	345

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: <i>Logos, Ethos, and Pathos</i>	346
--	-----

ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Examining Academic Arguments</i>	347
--	-----

Arguing for Ideas	347
-------------------	-----

ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Identifying Points for Arguments</i>	348
--	-----

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: <i>Identification</i>	349
--	-----

Building an Idea into an Argument	350
-----------------------------------	-----

USEFUL CONCEPTS FROM RHETORIC: <i>Common Places</i>	354
---	-----

Writing the Essay of Argument	356
-------------------------------	-----

Sample Student Essay	358
----------------------	-----

<i>Thinking About Student Writing</i>	360
---------------------------------------	-----

ASSIGNMENTS: <i>Argumentation</i>	361
-----------------------------------	-----

<i>Getting Involved Electronically</i>	363
--	-----

Credits	365
---------	-----

Subject Index	367
---------------	-----

Reading Index	376
---------------	-----



Writing
Your Self
into
College

P A R T
One



1

Strategic Writing

AIMS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter introduces a rhetorical approach to college writing. Rhetoric is the study of effective communication in specific situations. A rhetorical approach emphasizes that writing is a way of acting in situations. In college, most of your activity is communicative; you learn by listening and talking, by reading and writing. Becoming more skillful in these activities will help you become more involved and give your efforts more personal meaning. The concepts presented in this and the next chapter should help you develop terms to describe the rhetorical situations in which you find yourself and the goals you may wish to accomplish in those situations.

KEY POINTS

1. Writing is rhetorical: an action you take when you participate in a specific situation.
2. Rhetoric has its origins in the classical world, but two cultural changes since then affect your current rhetorical situation in college:
 - The rise of schooling and literacy
 - The specialization of knowledge and professions
3. In school and life we learn many strategies of minimizing our own feelings to please others. However, your success as a writer in college and elsewhere depends on your overcoming these strategies of disengagement so that you become more involved in your activities.
4. Involvement comes from finding out what is important to you and then acting on what you have found.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- How is writing different in different situations? How might college writing differ from the writing you did in high school? How do the goals differ? How do the styles differ?
- When have you felt most involved in learning? When have you felt least involved? Has the chance to discuss and write about what you are learning and thinking made a difference in how involved you feel?
- What do you hope to get out of your education? What does writing have to do with accomplishing those goals?

A First-Day Assignment

On the first day in writing courses, students are often asked to write some variation of the following assignment. You might take fifteen minutes and try it.

Write a paragraph introducing yourself to your instructor and your classmates. Tell about your previous experience in this subject, what you enjoy doing in school and out, what concerns you, and what your ambitions and goals are.

Although you know many things about yourself, this may not be an easy assignment to write. It raises questions about which you have little information on the first day of the term, perhaps even on your first day of college classes. Who are the people you are writing to? How will these strangers respond to what you write? What will this class be like? What will college be like? What impression will people get from your writing? What impression would you like to give in this class? What role and identity would you like to establish in college? This assignment asks to give a picture of yourself, but until you know more about the situation, you may not feel at all sure about what kind of picture you want to draw. So writing this assignment is not just a matter of simple description but rather a matter of self-presentation in a social situation.

One way to handle this assignment is to take no risks and just remain friendly.

Hi. I'm Bill Stanley, an eighteen-year-old freshman at State University. I graduated last year from Franklin Roosevelt High School, where I most enjoyed my courses in math and science. I also played trombone in band. I have always gotten good grades in English, although I find writing difficult. Teachers tell me I ought to be more descriptive, but I say why waste words once you get your idea across. I hope to major in biology and go on to medical school.