

HARRY BRENT/WILLIAM LUTZ
**RHETORICAL
CONSIDERATIONS**

**ESSAYS
FOR
ANALYSIS**

THIRD EDITION



Third Edition

RHETORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Essays for Analysis

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PREFACE

The third edition of *Rhetorical Considerations* seeks to awaken in students a desire to write about those issues closest to the heart of a liberal education. The editors also hope to guide students toward a consciousness of the writing process which will foster intelligence, grace, and style in each student's own prose.

The book is intended for use in a wide variety of writing courses and is especially directed toward entry-level composition programs in which students may need some basic direction in how to write about complex issues. The combination of short, medium, and moderately long essays allows the student to move from the practice of elementary writing principles to much more complex assignments. The dual tables of content provide the teacher with the flexibility to judge the general level of a class and to begin assigning readings as appropriate—according to rhetorical type or according to theme. Since most good essays illustrate combinations of organizational patterns, we often list a given piece under more than one rhetorical classification. Within the thematically organized sections, essays are clustered according to subtopics. There is also, at the end of the book, a full alphabetical listing of the contributors' names. All in all, the book provides flexibility for an instructor or director of composition to create a syllabus according to either rhetorical types or subject matter. In the process of learning more about their own writing, students may want, with their instructor's help, to chart directions through the book as the way naturally emerges from one assignment to the next.

We have included at the end of each section except the first a rhetorical analysis of one of the essays in that section. Each of these analyses focuses on various matters of organization and style. In each we try to give the student some explicit notion of what to look for in good writing—and, by implication, in their own writing. We have found that use of these analyses in our own classes helps students to develop a maturing sense of organization and style both in revisions of individual essays and from assignment to assignment.

As in previous editions, we begin the book with some general statements about writing which the instructor may assign from time to time as students become more aware of and interested in the problems writers face. One of these essays, by John Kenneth Galbraith, is especially for those students who may think writing the exclusive preserve of English departments.

Again we would like to thank the friends and colleagues who generously gave of their advice and criticism. Special appreciation goes to Paul O'Connell, Anna Lorang, Rita Lorang, Joan Miller, and Kathy Edge.

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THE WRITING PROCESS

How to Say Nothing in Five Hundred Words

Paul Roberts

Paul Roberts is widely recognized as one of the leaders of the 1950s "revolution" in the teaching of English grammar. His books English Syntax (1954) and Patterns of English (1956) brought the insights of descriptive linguistics to problems of composition.

Nothing About Something

- 1 It's Friday afternoon, and you have almost survived another week of classes. You are just looking forward dreamily to the week-end when the English instructor says: "For Monday you will turn in a five-hundred-word composition on college football."
- 2 Well, that puts a good big hole in the week-end. You don't have any strong views on college football one way or the other. You get rather excited during the season and go to all the home games and find it rather more fun than not. On the other hand, the class has been reading Robert Hutchins in the anthology and perhaps Shaw's "Eighty-Yard Run," and from the class discussion you have got the idea that the instructor thinks college football is for the birds. You are no fool, you. You can figure out what side to take.
- 3 After dinner you get out the portable typewriter that you got for high school graduation. You might as well get it over with and enjoy Saturday and Sunday. Five hundred words is about two double-spaced pages with normal margins. You put in a sheet of paper, think up a title, and you're off:
- 4

**WHY COLLEGE FOOTBALL SHOULD BE
ABOLISHED**

College football should be abolished because it's bad for the school and also bad for the players. The players are so busy practicing that they don't have any time for their studies.
- 5 This, you feel, is a mighty good start. The only trouble is that it's only thirty-two words. You still have four hundred and sixty-eight to go, and you've pretty well exhausted the subject. It comes to you that you do your best thinking in the morning, so you put away the typewriter and go to the movies. But the next morning you have to do your washing and some math problems, and in the afternoon you go to the game. The English instructor turns up too, and you