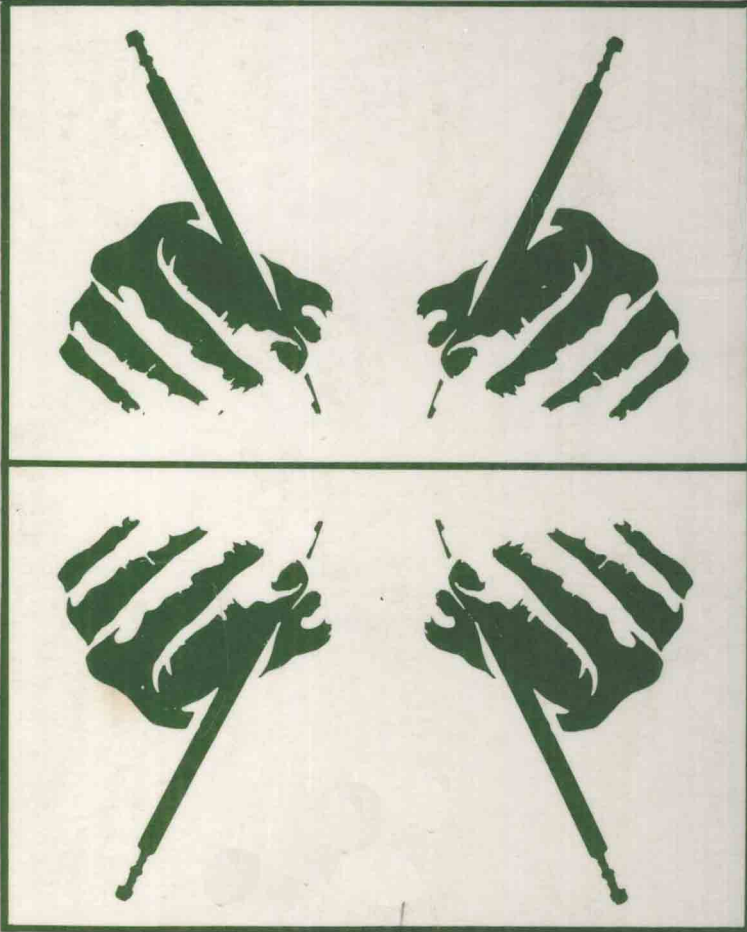


Second Edition

Workbook

The Writer's



Susan Day

The Writer's Workbook

Second Edition

McGraw-Hill Book Company

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THE WRITER'S WORKBOOK Second Edition

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To the Student

I put together *The Writer's Workbook* with my own students in mind--students, I assume, who are much like you. Your writing skills are shaky here and there, and besides, the whole writing experience has never exactly been a picnic. It probably never will be, but working through this book, if you put your mind to it, will strengthen your skills and may even ease the pain.

In making up the exercises for this Workbook, I'm depending, first, on your knowledge of spoken English, and, second, on your energetic attempts to deal with the material in your textbook. The exercises in this Workbook begin at a simpler level than those in the textbook: often, you can answer them according to what seems right to you as a speaker of English. I've avoided long passages of explanation, hoping that the process of working from simple to more complex problems will make you explain things to yourself in your own words. My goal is that after doing the exercises here, you will be able to face the material in your text with more confidence.

Susan Day

To the Instructor

The Writer's Workbook is an adjunct to *The Writer's Rhetoric and Handbook*, written by Elizabeth McMahan and me.

The exercises I've developed here are back-up systems to use with your whole class or with individual students. Part One, Writing Well, backs up Part One of *The Writer's Rhetoric*. I simplified and summarized the textbook because this material doesn't appear in *The Writer's Handbook*, which you may be using. Part Two, Just Your Basics, backs up Part Three of *The Writer's Rhetoric* or Part One of *The Writer's Handbook*. The exercises include traditional grammar, conventional punctuation and mechanics, standard usage, and spelling.

Although there are many exercises in the textbook, the chapters in them dealing with the nuts and bolts of writing skill are meant to be read by the student. The Workbook is meant to be done. I've assumed in many places that what your students don't need is more explanatory prose to read; what they need instead is an exercise that begins with a problem they can probably solve using their intuitive grasp of the English language and moves from there to a conscious discovery of the system and tradition that underlies that intuition. Then maybe all that prose in the textbook will mean something to them, and they can approach the more difficult exercises there with confidence.

In this second edition, I've profited from the advice of instructors and students who used the 1980 version. I have retained the informal, frequently humorous tone. As before, the sentences in an exercise often tell a story or comment on a social issue. I've also persisted in presenting the same skill in more than one part of the book: for example, identifying phrases and clauses appears in Unit 3, Paragraphs (under sentence variety); in Unit 7, Sentences; and in Unit 6, Grammar

Review. My reasoning is that what may bewilder a student in one context may be clear in a different context—or may become clear with repetition in different contexts. I've done away with sentence diagramming, having finally been persuaded that my own success with it must be some kind of personal quirk. I have expanded the revision section and added a section on summarizing. I have integrated the practice of peer editing into several exercises.

I owe my inspiration for exercises, my grasp of what's practical, and much of my sense of humor to my students. I owe deepest thanks to my friends Mark Silverstein and Sue LeSeure, who endured sweatshop conditions helping to produce this book. My editors at McGraw-Hill, especially Jim Dodd and Barry Benjamin deserve special thanks for devoting their attention to *The Writer's Rhetoric* and *The Writer's Workbook*.

Susan Day

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PART ONE

WRITING WELL

1

SUBJECTS AND THESES

FINDING A SUBJECT

Students in writing classes often complain that they can't think of anything to write about. Teachers, in turn, often complain that students aren't interested in anything and haven't had any ideas since fifth grade. You know that's not true, and so do I. You have plenty of interests. It's just that the sight of a bleak, white empty page turns you dull. To combat this tendency, you can work on a list of subjects that interest you—a list you can cling to in times of need.

Look over the five tables of contents from popular magazines on pages 3-7. Pick out subjects that interest you. Anything the listings remind you of is OK. For example, I'll look at the *Newsweek* table of contents and list five subjects of interest that come to my mind:

1. Journalism

("Newsmen and Their Perks" reminded me of this subject. As a journalist myself, I could find plenty to write about.)

2. Japan

(The article on Japanese education sparked my interest; I've admired Japanese art and textiles for a long time, and recently I've read a little about Japan's culture and institutions.)

3. Teenagers

(For various reasons, I have a special place in my heart for teenagers and often think and read and write about them. The review of *Valley Girl* jogged my memory.)

4. Health care

(This subject is on my mind a lot, especially since my doctor was just successfully sued for malpractice to the tune of \$192,000.)

5. Dancing

(Every kind from square to slam interests me. The article on George Balanchine caught my eye.)

Now you try by completing Exercises 1-1 and 1-2.

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