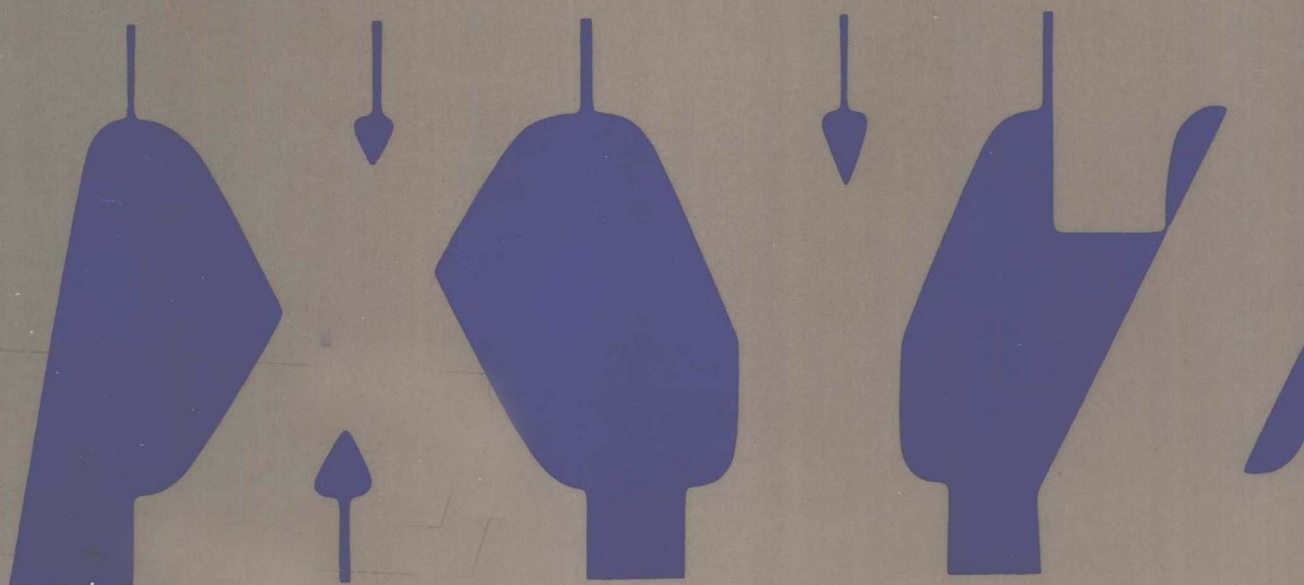


JANE PAZNIK-BONDARIN
MILTON BAXTER

Write and Write Again

A WORKTEXT WITH READINGS



WRITE AND WRITE AGAIN

**A Worktext
with Readings**

Jane Paznik-Bondarin

Milton Baxter

Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

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This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my grandmother, Ethel Baxter, my mother, Josephine Baxter, and my father, William Baxter.

M.B.

And to Devorah Abigail, Arley, and the Pazniks, Philmuses, Levines, and Bondarins.

J.P.-B.

PREFACE

For years we looked for a book we wanted to teach from. We wanted a book that treated our students like the intelligent adults they are. We wanted a book that made our students more aware of the language they used and wanted to use. We wanted a book that demonstrated the writing process professional writers use and that supplied within one set of covers interesting things to read and instruction about the sticky points of standard English grammar. Never having found that book, we wrote one ourselves, hoping it would do what we think is most important.

Write and Write Again: A Worktext with Readings is a book for basic writers. In it we use the process approach to writing that professional writers use. That is, we help students reach into their own experience to find ideas they want to set down on paper; we help students rethink their pieces based on their audience and purpose, and we propose systematic guidance for rewriting; we also review aspects of standard English grammar and sentence structure that will help students proofread their work.

Writers, of course, do all three things at once: set down ideas, rewrite, and proofread. They are always going back and forth—inserting a new idea here, moving a thought from one place to another, polishing a phrase there. Writing is a chaotic process. For teaching purposes we have tried to simplify it and talk about the writing process in three stages: setting down ideas, rewriting ideas, proofreading. Our students have found this method helpful, even though it is clear from their drafts that, once they get the hang of it, they, too, are constantly moving back and forth from one part of the process to another. Each chapter of *Write and Write Again* “walks” a student through the creation and polishing of an essay.

Basic writers often do not trust their understanding of their own language or reading. We attempt to build on students’ intuitions about spoken language to increase understanding of the demands and possibilities of written language.

Each chapter of *Write and Write Again* contains many opportunities for students to read and write. Each chapter begins with a short, interesting passage. We follow each of the ten reading passages with questions and information that enhance students' abilities to read "on the line," "between the lines," and "beyond the lines." The early questions build confidence in literal understanding; the later ones ask students to stretch their minds and relate their own lives to the text. A vocabulary section helps students integrate new words into their own writing and points out interesting features of the language.

Because the writing process is the heart of the book, each chapter guides the students through the stages of writing an essay, including exercises and strategies that focus their rewriting. Each chapter also contains instruction and exercises in grammar, spelling, and punctuation to help students with the proofreading stage of the writing process.

Chapter 1, "Learning the Writing Process," introduces students to the stages in the writing process and asks them to compose an essay by working through the steps of the process. We introduce students to free writing and focused writing as ways of producing a first draft. Chapter 2, "Choosing Your Writing Voice," helps students to distinguish between written and oral language by using the dictionary to discuss language variation. Chapter 3, "Writing a Narrative: Telling What Happened," shows students how to read and write narratives with effective detail and order. Chapter 4, "Writing a Narrative: Making a Point," adds a discussion of theme and topic sentence to the discussion of narratives. In Chapter 5, "Describing a Place: Showing Versus Telling," students learn about descriptive words that "show" rather than "tell" and work on various strategies involving spatial order for organizing their ideas. In Chapter 6, "Describing a Person: Making a Point," students learn to organize their details around a dominant impression or theme.

In Chapter 7, "Giving Directions," we introduce expository writing. Students read and write process papers and become more aware of using explicit details and of sequencing ideas. Chapter 8, "Defining," illustrates how to clarify by extended definition. Chapter 9, "Comparing, Contrasting, and Giving Examples," presents strategies to help students organize and develop their ideas by examining and explicating similarities and differences. In Chapter 10, "Taking a Stand," students learn to develop an "arguable thesis" and to support it.

An Instructor's Manual for the text is also available. The manual offers practical suggestions for teaching with the text, strategies for using the text in different courses, and answers to selected exercises.

Throughout our years of teaching, we have learned a great deal from our students. We hope we have helped them become better writers; we know they have helped us and continue to help us become better and more sensitive teachers.

Besides our students, we are grateful for the continuing encouragement of our colleagues in the English Department and the Writing Center at Borough

of Manhattan Community College, whose commitment to finding new ways to teach writing is very strong. We are indebted to our editors, Paul O'Connell, Jennifer Crewe, Barbara Heinssen and Eben Ludlow. We gratefully acknowledge our debt to Ron Harris, our production editor, and to Judith Longo (Ocean County College) and Audrey J. Roth (Miami-Dade Community College), who reviewed the manuscript. Our friend and colleague Georgia S. Dunbar gave us invaluable assistance on the manuscript and thoughtful suggestions for alternative ways of using the book.

Most of all, we thank our families—Arley and Devorah; Maxine, Eric, and Gerard—who have allowed us time to work and supported us throughout. We're grateful that Arley Bondarin, Kathy Sloane, and Barbara Smith have allowed their photographs to be shown in the text.

More than any other person, we thank Arley Bondarin for his prodigious efforts on our behalf. In every phase of the writing, rewriting, and production, his professional judgment and good sense were invaluable aids to reworking our ideas and words.

J. P.-B.

M. B.

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Learning the Writing Process

1

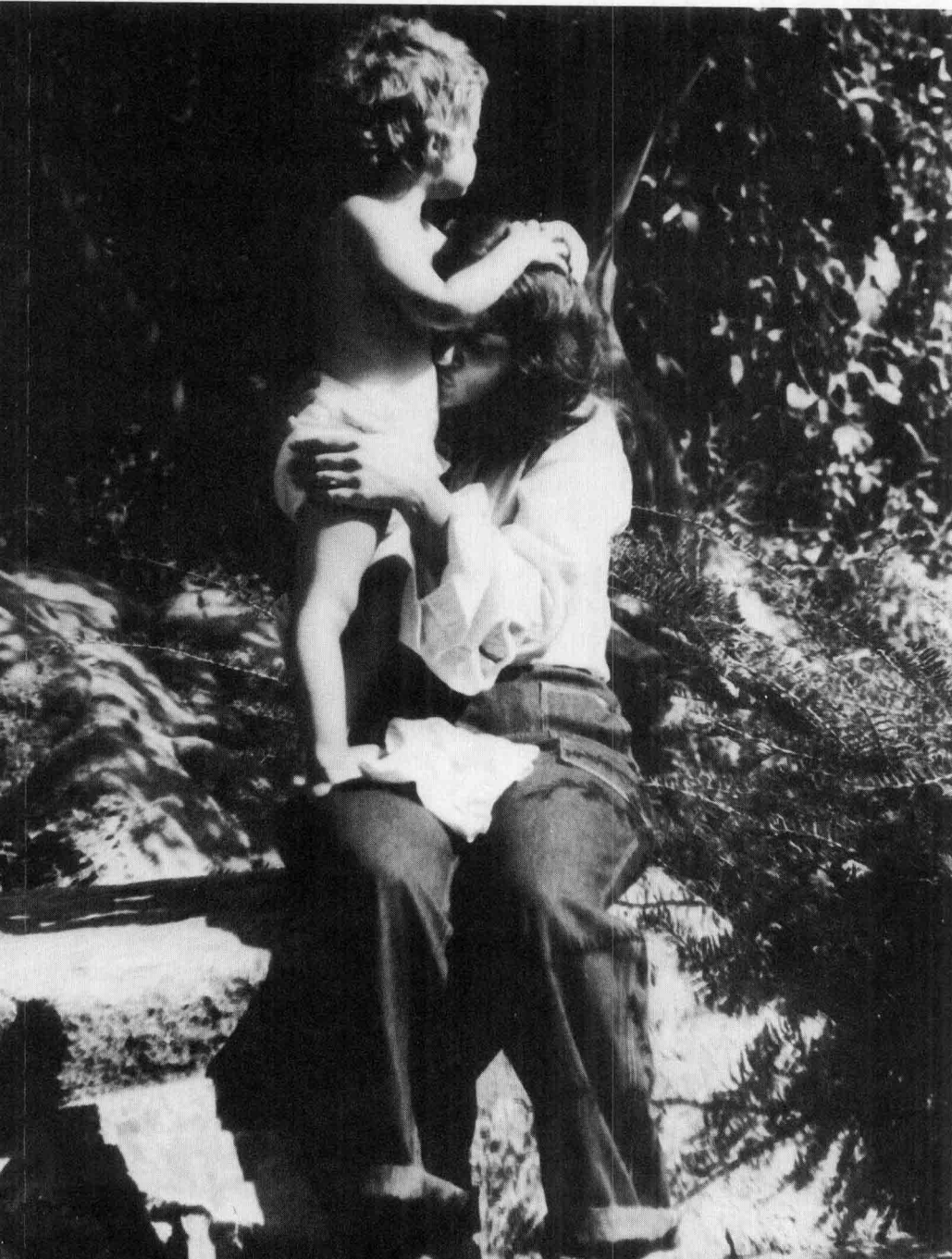


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Arley Bondarin



READING

PREVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre means “before” and *view* means “look.” The preview questions point out certain words or phrases that will help you focus on the ideas in the essay that follows. They also ask you to look at the way in which the essay is written.

As you read “The Transaction” by William Zinsser, look for information that answers these questions:

1. What does Dr. Brock think about writing?
2. What does Zinsser think about writing?
3. Do all writers work in the same way?
4. What makes writing good?
5. Did you like reading about Zinsser’s experience? Was the essay more interesting because it was about something that happened to the author?
6. Do you like to read the exact words someone uses? Is the use of “direct quotations” effective?

Notes

E. B. White (1899–1985). American writer of essays and poetry. He also wrote children’s books, among them *Charlotte’s Web*.

James Thurber (1894–1961). American writer and humorist; one of his essays, “The Bear Who Let It Alone,” appears in this book.

Walden Pond. A place in Concord, Massachusetts, where philosopher Henry David Thoreau composed *Walden*, an essay about simplifying life.

The Transaction

William Zinsser

William Zinsser is an American writer, teacher, editor, and critic. He has written for the New York Times and taught at Yale University. This essay is from his book On Writing Well.

(1) Five or six years ago a school in Connecticut held “a day devoted to the arts,” and I was asked if I would come and talk about writing as a

vocation. When I arrived I found that a second speaker had been invited—Dr. Brock (as I'll call him), a surgeon who had recently begun to write and had sold some stories to national magazines. He was going to talk about writing as an avocation. That made us a panel, and we sat down to face a crowd of student newspaper editors and reporters, English teachers and parents, all eager to learn the secrets of our glamorous work.

(2) Dr. Brock was dressed in a bright red jacket, looking vaguely Bohemian, as authors are supposed to look, and the first question went to him. What is it like to be a writer?

(3) He said it was tremendous fun. Coming home from an arduous day at the hospital, he would go straight to his yellow pad and write his tensions away. The words just flowed. It was easy.

(4) I then said that writing wasn't easy and it wasn't fun. It was hard and lonely, and the words seldom just flowed.

(5) Next Dr. Brock was asked if it was important to rewrite. Absolutely not, he said. "Let it all hang out," and whatever form the sentences take will reflect the writer at his most natural.

(6) I then said that rewriting is the essence of writing. I pointed out that professional writers rewrite their sentences repeatedly and they rewrite what they have rewritten. I mentioned that E. B. White and James Thurber were known to rewrite their pieces eight or nine times.

(7) "What do you do on days when it isn't going well?" Dr. Brock was asked. He said he just stopped writing and put the work aside for a day when it would go better.

(8) I then said that the professional writer must establish a daily schedule and stick to it. I said that writing is a craft, not an art, and that the man who runs away from his craft because he lacks inspiration is fooling himself. He is also going broke.

(9) "What if you're feeling depressed or unhappy?" a student asked. "Won't that affect your writing?"

(10) Probably it will, Dr. Brock replied. Go fishing. Take a walk.

(11) Probably it won't, I said. If your job is to write everyday, you learn to do it like any other job.

(12) A student asked if we found it useful to circulate in the literary world. Dr. Brock said that he was greatly enjoying his new life as a man of letters, and he told several lavish stories of being taken to lunch by his publisher and his agent at Manhattan restaurants where writers and editors gather. I said that professional writers are solitary drudges who seldom see other writers.

(13) "Do you put symbolism in your writing?" a student asked me.

(14) "Not if I can help it," I replied. I have an unbroken record of missing the deeper meaning in any story, play or movie, and as for dance and mime, I have never had even a remote notion of what is being conveyed.

(15) "I love symbols!" Dr. Brock exclaimed, and he described with gusto the joys of weaving them through his work.

(16) So the morning went, and it was a revelation to all of us. At the end Dr. Brock told me he was enormously interested in my answers—it had

never occurred to him that writing could be hard. I told him I was just as interested in *his* answers—it had never occurred to me that writing could be easy. (Maybe I should take up surgery on the side.)

(17) As for the students, anyone might think that we left them bewildered, but in fact we probably gave them a broader glimpse of the writing process than if only one of us had talked. For of course there isn't any "right" way to do such intensely personal work. There are all kinds of writers and all kinds of methods, and any method that helps somebody to say what he wants to say is the right method for him.

(18) Some people write by day, others by night. Some people need silence, others turn on the radio. Some write by hand, some by typewriters, some by talking into a tape recorder. Some people write their first draft in one long burst and then revise; others can't write the second paragraph until they have fiddled endlessly with the first.

(19) But all of them are vulnerable and all of them are tense. They are driven by a compulsion to put some part of themselves on paper, and yet they don't just write what comes naturally. They sit down to commit an act of literature, and the self who emerges on paper is a far stiffer person than the one who sat down. The problem is to find the real man or woman behind all the tension.

(20) For ultimately the product that any writer has to sell is not his subject, but who he is. I often find myself reading with interest about a topic that I never thought would interest me—some unusual scientific quest, for instance. What holds me is the enthusiasm of the writer for his field. How was he drawn into it? What emotional baggage did he bring along? How did it change his life? It is not necessary to want to spend a year alone at Walden Pond to become deeply involved with a man who did.

(21) This is the personal transaction that is at the heart of good nonfiction writing. Out of it come two of the most important qualities that this book will go in search of: humanity and warmth. Good writing has an aliveness that keeps the reader reading from one paragraph to the next, and it's not a question of gimmicks to "personalize" the author. It's a question of using the English language in a way that will achieve the greatest strength and the least clutter.

(22) Can such principles be taught? Maybe not. But most of them can be learned.

QUESTIONS OF CONTENT

These questions will help you understand what is in the essay:

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Why were Zinsser and Dr. Brock invited to speak at the school?
- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. to discuss glamour. | c. to work. |
| b. to talk about writing. | d. to face a crowd of students. |