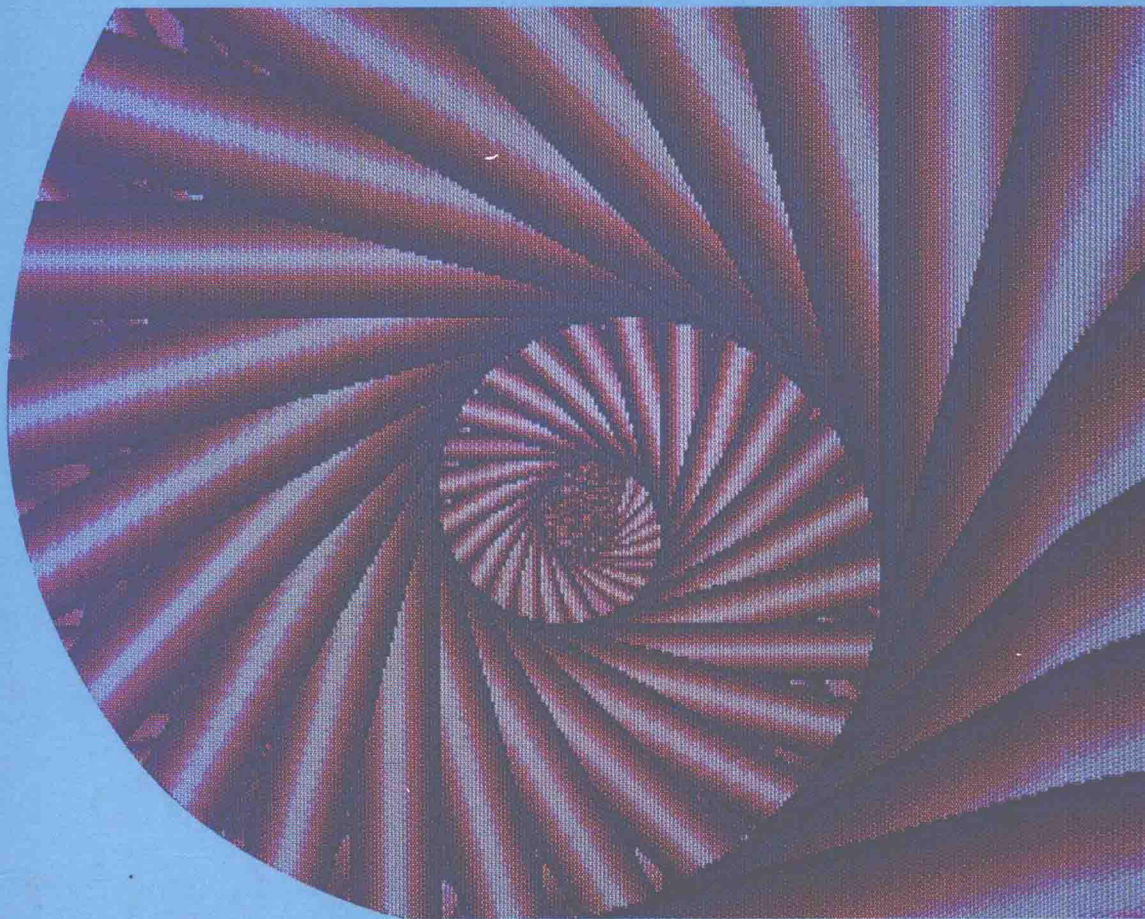


PRENTICE HALL
GUIDE TO
**BASIC
WRITING**



Emil Roy • Sandra Roy

Prentice Hall Guide to Basic Writing



Emil Roy

University of South Carolina

Sandra Roy



Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Roy, Emil.
[Guide to basic writing]
Prentice Hall guide to basic writing / Emil Roy, Sandra Roy.
p. cm.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-13-706079-3 : \$15.50
1. English language--Rhetoric. 2. English language--
-Grammar--1950- I. Roy, Sandra. II. Title.
PE1408.R774 1989
808'.042--dc19

88-23283
CIP

Editorial/production supervision and
interior design: Cyndy Lyle Rymer
Cover design: Lundgren Graphics, Ltd.
Manufacturing buyer: Raymond Keating



© 1989 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.
A Division of Simon & Schuster
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be
reproduced, in any form or by any means,
without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-706079-3

ISBN 0-13-706087-4

Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited, *London*
Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*
Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., *Toronto*
Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, S.A., *Mexico*
Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*
Simon & Schuster Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*
Editora Prentice-Hall do Brasil, Ltda., *Rio de Janeiro*

Preface

This book uses up-to-date writing theory to help students improve their own writing, both in the classroom and on their own. We've included interesting material in the exercises to stimulate the writing process and enliven class discussion. The discovery questions that accompany each writing project aid students in making good judgments both about their own writing and that of others. The extensive grammar section explains usage in down-to-earth understandable terms.

Our approach, as well as the exercises, have all been classroom tested. Moreover, the instructor's manual and supplementary materials allow the instructor to focus on individual class differences and remedy weaknesses where they occur. Our aim has been to develop an approach to writing that is very thorough, interesting, and occasionally amusing.

We would like to thank the following reviewers for their contributions: Tracey Baker, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Vivian Brown, Laredo Junior College; Therese Brychta, Truckee Meadows Community College; Ian Cruickshank, St. Louis Community College, Florissant Valley; Sallyanne H. Fitzgerald, University of Missouri at St. Louis; Sally Geil, Brevard Community College; Theodore E. Johnston, El Paso Community College; Judith Longo, Ocean County College; Joyce Powell, North Lake College; Barbara Weaver, Ball State University.

Our thanks is extended to our children, Rosalind and Portia, who endured distracted, overworked parents; our mothers, Fern Malottke and Grace Roy, for their support; our artist, Al Beyers, whose delightful drawings have greatly enhanced the book; and to our students whose responses, comments, and suggestions formed a basis for our work. Finally, we'd like to dedicate this book to the memory of our fathers, Louis Roy and Harold Malottke.

Contents

Preface *ix*

PART ONE: THE WRITING PROCESS

Chapter 1: The Journal *1*

- Why Do It? *2*
- The Workshop *2*
- Freewriting: What Is It? Why Is It Useful? *4*
- After Finishing a Freewrite, *4*
- Parts of the Journal: What Should You Include? *5*
- Telling a Story: How to Do It, *7*
- Meditation: What It Is, *7*
- The Interior Monologue, *8*

Chapter 2: Generating Ideas *11*

- Brainstorming, *12*
- Clustering, *14*
- Informal Outlining, *15*
- The Reporter's Formula, *17*
- Survey Questions, *19*

Chapter 3: Designing the Paragraph 23

- Identifying Paragraphs, 24
- Designing a Paragraph, 26
- Supporting Topic Sentences, 31
- Writing Qualifying Sentences, 33
- Paragraph Conclusions, 37
- Ordering Sentences Within the Paragraph, 37
- Using Transition Words to Give Paragraphs Coherence, 40
- Using Pronouns or Synonyms to Link Ideas, 41

Chapter 4: Writing Paragraphs 45

- Choosing a Topic, 47
- Generating Ideas, 48
- Being Specific, 48
- An Informal Outline, 49
- Subject, Audience, and Purpose, 50
- The Topic Sentence, 51
- The First Draft, 52
- Analyzing the First Draft, 53
- A First Revision, 54
- Analyzing the Second Draft, 55
- The Final Revision and Editing, 58

Chapter 5: The Narrative 61

- Choosing a Topic, 64
- Using Time to Put a Narrative in Order, 64
- Using Transitions, 65
- Generating Narrative Ideas, 67
- Subject, Purpose, and Audience, 68
- Writing the First Draft, 69
- Analyzing the First Draft, 69
- Action Verbs, 70
- Adding Modifiers, 71
- Adding Gestures and Dialogue, 73
- Writing the Second Draft, 74
- Analyzing the Second Draft, 74
- The Final Revision and Editing, 77

Chapter 6: The Descriptive Paragraph 79

- Choosing a Topic, 81
- Generating Ideas, 81
- Being Specific, 82
- Subject, Audience, and Purpose, 85
- The Topic Sentence, 86
- Organizing the Descriptive Paper, 87
- Using an Informal Outline, 89

Writing the First Draft, 89
Analyzing the First Draft, 90
A First Revision, 91
Analyzing the Second Draft, 92
Final Editing, 95

Chapter 7: The Process Paragraph 97

Choosing a Topic, 100
Generating Ideas, 100
Getting Organized: A Preliminary Outline, 103
Writing the First Draft, 108
Analyzing the First Draft, 109
Writing the Second Draft, 110
Analyzing the Second Draft, 110
Final Editing, 114

Chapter 8: The Expository Essay 115

Types of Paragraphs, 118
The Introductory Paragraph, 119
The Transitional Paragraph, 121
The Concluding Paragraph, 121
Division and Classification, 122
Choosing a Topic, 123
Generating Ideas, 124
Clustering, 124
Organizing Your Paper: Informal Outlining, 125
Exploring Your Subject: Journalistic Questions, 126
Subject, Purpose, and Audience, 127
Designing Your Thesis, 128
Writing the First Draft, 131
Analyzing the First Draft, 132
Writing the Second Draft, 133
Analyzing the Second Draft, 134
The Final Revision and Editing, 137

Chapter 9: The Cause and Effect Essay 139

Defining Terms, 140
Choosing a Topic, 141
Generating Ideas, 142
Writing a Thesis, 144
Subject, Audience, and Purpose, 147
Writing the First Draft, 147
Analyzing the First Draft, 148
Writing the Second Draft, 149
Analyzing the Second Draft, 150
The Final Revision and Editing, 153

Chapter 10: The Comparison and Contrast Essay 155

- Choosing a Topic, 158
- Generating Ideas, 158
- Composing the Thesis, 160
- Subject, Audience, and Purpose, 162
- Organizing the Comparison and Contrast Paper, 162
- Writing Your Thesis, 164
- Writing the First Draft, 164
- Analyzing the First Draft, 165
- Writing the Second Draft, 167
- Analyzing the Second Draft, 168
- Editing the Final Draft, 170

Chapter 11: The Persuasion Essay 173

- Choosing a Topic, 177
- Arguing and Defining the Claim, 177
- Claim and Audience, 181
- Logical Fallacies, 182
- Supporting Your Argument, 186
- Constructing a Persuasive Argument, 188
- Writing the First Draft, 190
- Analyzing the First Draft, 191
- Writing the Second Draft, 192
- Analyzing the Second Draft, 193
- The Final Revision and Editing, 197

Chapter 12: Timed Writings and Essay Examinations 199

- Preparing in Advance, 200
- Summarizing, 201
- Reading the Questions Carefully, 203
- Allocating Your Time, 204
- Planning your Essays, 204
- Prewriting Your Timed Essays, 205
- Writing the Timed Essay, 206
- Rewriting and Editing, 206
- Summary, 206

PART TWO: WORKING WITH LANGUAGE

Chapter 13: Correcting Fragments 207

- Finding and Correcting Incomplete Sentences, 207
- Finding the Verbs, 209
- Identifying Subjects, 210
- Telling Subjects from Verbs, 211
- Identifying Complete Sentences, 212

Completing and Expanding Simple Sentences, 214
Creating Complete Sentences, 216
Troublesome Connectives, 216
Joining with Coordinators, 219
Dependent Parts of Sentences, 221
“Who” Clauses, 222
“When” and “Why” Clauses, 224
“What” Clauses, 225

Chapter 14: Correcting Comma Splices and Run-ons 231

Comma Splices, 232
Run-ons, 233
Words Causing Run-ons and Comma Splices, 234
Pitfalls, 239

Chapter 15: Verbs 241

Subject-Verb Agreement, 242
Problem Subjects, 245
Irregular Verbs: Be, Do, and Have, 249
Past Tense, 251
Subject-Verb Agreement: Special Cases, 256
Summing Up, 258

Chapter 16: Pronouns and Prepositions 261

Pronouns, 262
Pronoun-Verb Agreement: Singular, 262
Pronoun-Verb Agreement: Plural, 263
Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement, 264
Personal Pronouns, 266
Relative Pronouns, 266
Interrogative Pronouns, 267
Demonstrative Pronouns, 267
Indefinite Pronouns, 268
Possessive Pronouns, 268
Summing Up Pronoun Agreement, 269
Prepositions, 269

Chapter 17: Punctuation 273

The Period, 274
The Question Mark, 275
The Exclamation Point, 276
The Comma, 277
The Semicolon, 279
The Colon, 281
The Apostrophe, 282
The Dash, 283

The Hyphen, 283
Parentheses, 285
Brackets, 285
Quotations and Quotation Marks, 285

Chapter 18: Capitalization, Mechanics, and Spelling 289

Capitalization, 290
Abbreviations, 293
Numerals, 293
Italics, 294
Spelling, 294
Typical Spelling Errors, 295
Helpful Spelling Rules, 296

Chapter 19: Vocabulary 301

The News, 302
Feelings, 304
Actions Speak as Loudly as Words, 305
The Way We Are, 307
Food and Drink, 308
Persuading the Public, 310
Appearances, 311
The French, 312
From the Latin, 314
Words from Other Languages, 315

Chapter 20: Readability and Style 319

Making the Subject the Doer, 320
Changing Passive Verbs to Active, 324
Loading the Pattern, 327
Finding the Base Clauses: Decombining, 329
Using a Readable Sentence Pattern: Recombining, 331
Getting Rid of *There* and *It*: The Two Dummies, 335

Chapter 21: Tone and Image 337

Replacing Vague Words with Specific Ones, 338
Influencing Attitudes, 341
Using Figurative Language, 348

Index 351

CHAPTER ONE



The Journal

Why Do It?

Regular journal entries will loosen up your writing style because you will be writing mostly for yourself. You can write whatever you like in your journal, although we include some ideas to help you along. You will also practice good habits. You will begin looking for writing ideas; you'll also play with words and turns of phrase. You might copy down a news report about a judge who threw out lawsuits by two men who fought at a nudist club. He said he "got the bare facts out and reached the naked truth" but could not decide who was at fault. And you may record the events in a busy, very active phase of your life. Reading over your writing may put you in better touch with yourself. Later on, you will also see how your writing has improved.

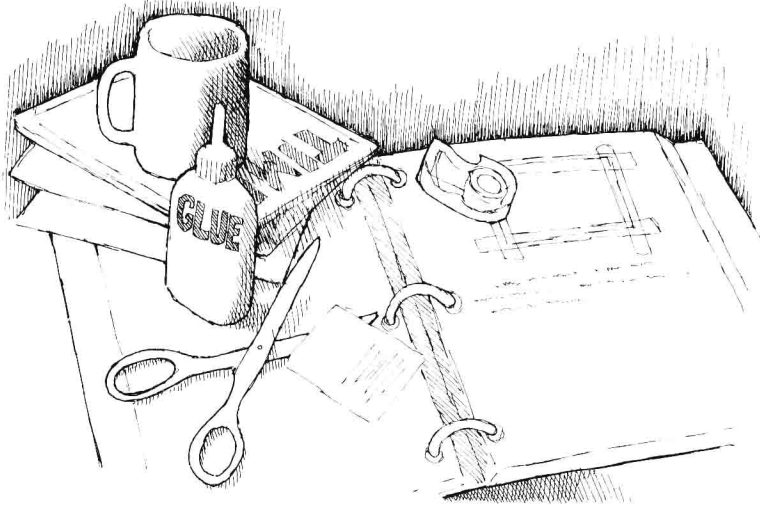
The Workshop

To get ready to write in a journal, you should get together a few helpful supplies.

Plan on keeping your journal in a three-ring or spiral notebook or on a bound set of 5" × 8" cards—whatever your instructor recommends. (A loose-leaf notebook lets you move the pages around easily.)

You will also feel more confident of your writing if you use ink.

Carry around a glue stick or tube, a scissors, and perhaps cellophane tape.



These tools will help you clip and collect various items from comic strips such as “Hägar the Horrible” or “Peanuts,” a quotation or news article, an especially appealing advertisement, or an address to write to.

Date your entries and number your pages.

Leave wide margins.

Give yourself space to make notes or comments, or to draw lines and arrows. Writing is a messy process, at least in the beginning; do not pay much attention to neatness in your journals.

EXERCISE 1.1

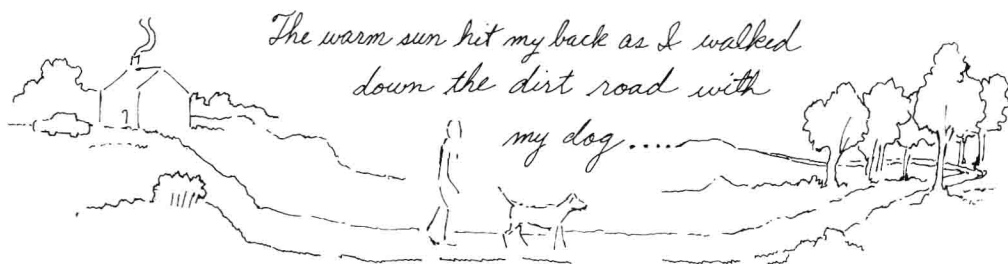
Daily Journal Writing

Plan to write at least fifteen to twenty minutes a day. Choosing the same time and place each day will help make it a habit. Keep it going as long as possible. Include the following parts for each entry.

1. A date (and maybe time of day).
2. Your entry.
3. Notes in the margin to mark important parts.
4. A sentence summing up what you have written.
5. A title at the beginning.

Freewriting: What Is It? Why Is It Useful?

At times, write quickly without pondering deeply. This is called *freewriting*. You will often put drafts together this way after you have made some notes. It is easy to get started. Sometimes you just begin writing. You or your instructor may limit your writing time to fifteen or twenty minutes. Try to get as many words as possible down on paper within the time limit.



As you write, it may help to read over what you have put down for ideas. However, do not cross out words or rewrite yet. If you get stalled, fill in with “I can’t think of anything to write.” Or repeat the previous sentence until a new idea comes to you. One student freewrote this entry:

February 18, 1986

Have you ever noticed that if you look into darkness long enough, you see things? For example, when you close your eyes, you can see dots and lines, sometimes colors—purples and flashing pinks. You can imagine that you see something or somebody moving. Maybe somebody is perching quietly on your desk chair, watching you intently as you pretend to sleep. The darkness is a good place for your imagination. At night I wake up because of a noise and imagine I see something. It takes me forever to go back to sleep because I think someone is under my bed, in my closet, or in my bathroom. Usually I check in my bathroom when I come home from a date or a night class, but there is never anyone in my bathroom.

Donna Miller



After Finishing a Freewrite

When you have completed your freewrite, sum up the main idea that you developed. Donna put the plan she followed in these words: “In the darkness, I often imagine exciting and scary things.” Incidentally, after finishing a draft, think of a title. Donna labeled her entry “Dark Imaginings.”

EXERCISE 1.2

Freewriting

Write freely for a period of time, fifteen or twenty minutes or so. Gather your materials and tools, and find a comfortable place. Avoid being disturbed by friends, a television, or telephone. Then begin writing. If you need a topic, consider one of the following.

1. The way a town or city looks from a nearby hilltop
2. Circus animals
3. Someone who enjoys messiness
4. Sorting through your closet or bureau, deciding what to keep and what to discard

After writing for your allotted time, sum up.

Your summary:

Your title: _____

Write again for five or ten minutes, putting your summary sentence first. Sum up your rewrite by telling how you feel or what you learned:

Parts of the Journal: What Should You Include?

In some ways, your journal is a sort of commonplace book. You write about what happened during the day and how you felt about it. You record interesting and valuable impressions. Carry your notebook or binder with you. Then you can react quickly to things that happen to you. The key is *detail*. Describe, as specifically and concretely as possible,

- *What* happened
- *Where* it happened
- *When* it happened

Your moods and feelings are important, too. One student describes a typical day in her life. In the process, she tells how hard it is to keep her roles straight:

If I were to star in a TV series, they would have to call it “Rubber Mommie.” How far can one person be extended? Before being a mommie to my children, I first have to spend the night at the Kwik Shop on the yard shift. Needless to say, I arrive home to fix breakfast feeling like a zombie. Bed looks so inviting, but I have too much to do before I sleep. I knock the crumbs from the kitchen table, rush the kids off to school, and grab a notebook and head out the door to USC. My full-time jobs are being a wife, a student, and a Kwik Shop worker.

Wanda Dicks



You may wish to divide your journal into sections. You could use about half of it for daily incidents. A quarter might go for quotes, pictures, and interesting words. For example, you might decide to copy down a joke made by Terry Sanford, a sixty-eight-year-old candidate for the U.S. Senate: “I complained to my mother, who’s ninety-seven and still driving her own car, that they’re trying to make an issue of my age.” She replied, “Why Son, that’s ridiculous—you’re old enough to run.” You could use the rest of your journal for questions and ideas.

EXERCISE 1.3

Ideas for Journal Entries

Use the following ideas to develop journal entries. Write quickly and concretely. Do not stop to look up words or wonder about punctuation. Do not go back to revise. When you finish a segment, sum it up in a sentence. Then give it a title.

1. The postal service recently found several hundred letters written by servicemen in 1944 that were never delivered. Imagine that you are writing a letter to a close friend or spouse. He or she will read it thirty years from now. What would you say?
2. When is the first time you ever went into a hospital? Try to recall the smells, your feelings, the things that were said.
3. Someone has said that swimming pools stand for things in movies or television. They indicate things like an uncertain future (*E.T.*), newfound status (*Top Gun*), becoming young again (*Cocoon*), and boy-meets-girl (*Witness*). What object in your life has special meaning? Describe it, and tell what it means to you.
4. When did you get caught doing something you should not have done? How did you react? What would you rather have done?
5. How do you feel about speaking before a group? Describe a time when you did so. How did you feel before, during, and after?
6. If you could design a special place to relax, where would it be? What could people do there? How would it resemble and differ from other such places?
7. Which of your personal traits do you consider to be the most outstanding? Do other people think so, too?
8. What person from your own or an older generation have you most wanted to be like?