

The background of the book cover is an aerial photograph of terraced hills. The hills are covered in crops, creating a series of concentric, wavy lines that spiral down the slopes. The color palette is dominated by warm, earthy tones: deep browns, oranges, and yellows, suggesting a late autumn or early spring setting. The lighting creates strong shadows and highlights, emphasizing the texture and contours of the terraces.

Stephen McDonald ✧ William Salomone

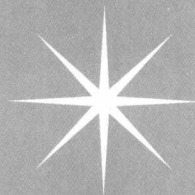
# *The Writer's Response*

*A Reading-Based Approach  
to College Writing*

Third Edition



# The Writer's Response



## *A Reading-Based Approach to College Writing*

**Stephen McDonald**

*Palomar College*

**William Salomone**

*Palomar College*

**THOMSON**  
  
**WADSWORTH**

Australia Canada Mexico Singapore Spain  
United Kingdom United States

## ***Dedication***

*With love to George and Joan McDonald  
and to Kathryn and Michelle Salomone*



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Jailbreak Marriage, *Gail Sheehy*  
Getting to Know about You and Me,  
*Chana Schoenberger*  
Surviving a Year of Sleepless Nights,  
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*and Marjorie Cramer*

The Trials of Animals, *Cleveland Amory*

# Preface

The premise of *The Writer's Response* is that it is nearly impossible to write well without also reading well, that college courses today demand not only that students write clearly and read accurately but also that they write effectively *about* what they have read. *The Writer's Response* is designed as an introductory text to academic writing, the type of writing based on the careful, deliberate reading and the clear, critical thinking demanded of students throughout their college careers.

## The Reason for This Text

### Writing in Response to Reading

College courses outside of our English departments rarely ask students to write personal experience essays, nor do they ask students to write papers on topics *similar* to those they have read in some textbook. Rather, such classes more often ask that students write papers and essays in direct response to ideas they have encountered in assigned reading. Such writing assignments demand careful reading and clear summary. They demand that students be able to recognize and respond to specific points in the material they have read, to synthesize ideas from several reading selections, and to evaluate and to argue about the ideas they have found in their reading material. *The Writer's Response* introduces students to these and other skills they will need to write successful college-level papers.

### Using Personal Experience

Although *The Writer's Response* introduces students to academic writing, it does not at all ignore the importance of their personal experiences, nor does it fail to recognize that writing about themselves is often the best way for writers to find their own voices and to discover that they do indeed have something to say. For this reason, the assignments throughout *The Writer's Response* ask students to use personal experience to respond to the material they have read in the text when it is appropriate



to do so. Chapters 1–4 in particular emphasize personal responses. Then, when the students are writing more directly *about* what they have read in Chapters 5–8, optional assignments allow instructors to assign personal experience responses when they want to do so.

## About the Text

*The Writer's Response* integrates reading, writing, sentence combining, and editing. Its writing instruction is kept simple and clear, and its reading selections consist of over sixty short articles, most of which are both recent and timely in their subject matter.

### Organization

#### *Part One: The Reading-Writing Conversation*

Part One, consisting of the first four chapters, introduces students to the reading and writing processes and to the concepts of unity, coherence, and development. Each of these chapters contains a variety of reading selections to illustrate the points being made and to provide material that students can respond to using their own personal experience. In these first four chapters we want students to become comfortable with the writing process and familiar with the elements of well-written paragraphs and essays. At the same time, we want students to become careful readers and to recognize that accurate reading is an integral part of clear thinking and good writing.

#### *Part Two: Writing about Reading*

Part Two consists of four chapters that introduce students to ways of writing about what they have read. We start Part Two with a chapter on how to write brief summaries, extended summaries, and summary-response essays because so often students have trouble doing much more than identifying the central idea of what they have read. Writing the summary gives them practice in recognizing and expressing both the central idea and the supporting points of a reading selection. We then move to a chapter on evaluating the effectiveness of material they read. In this chapter students must read accurately as well as explain why they have or have not found a selection convincing, persuasive, or effective. In the next chapter, students synthesize the issues involved in several reading selections. Here, students must not only summarize what they have read but also recognize connections among reading selections and explain those connections in their papers. The final chapter of Part Two asks students to argue from several reading selections, using material from a number of brief articles to support their positions.

#### *Part Three: Editing Skills*

Part Three of *The Writer's Response* is meant to act as a supplement to the primary instruction provided in Parts One and Two. It serves as a brief handbook for those students who need help with grammar, punctuation,

or usage problems, and it allows the instructor to cover such material as needed. We have arranged it as a separate part of the text rather than spreading its material throughout each chapter so that the student can quickly and conveniently use it as an aid in the editing process.

### ***Part Four: Additional Readings for Writing***

Part Four includes twenty reading selections for the instructor to use in addition to those in the body of the text. The first ten selections cover a variety of topics appropriate for the writing assignments in the first six chapters. The remaining ten selections are then grouped into three specific topic areas so that they can be used as synthesis and argument topics in Chapters 7 and 8. All of the reading selections reflect the criteria discussed below.

## **Features**

### ***The Reading Selections***

In choosing the reading selections for *The Writer's Response*, we have kept several criteria in mind. First, we wanted most of the selections to be relatively brief since this text is, after all, an introduction to academic writing. For that reason, the majority of the selections are only a few pages in length. However, we also wanted our students to have to "stretch" their mental muscles at times, so we have included some longer, more complex articles for instructors to use as they see fit. Second, we wanted the reading selections to be both timely and interesting, appealing to as wide a range of students as possible. To achieve this end, we have chosen articles that challenge the students to think about who they are as well as about how they fit into our increasingly multicultural world. Titles ranging from "Are You Living Mindlessly?" to "A Generation of Bigots Comes of Age" to "The Changing Face of America" reflect the variety of topics to be found in this text. Finally, to allow for the kind of synthesis and argument that *The Writer's Response* is meant to encourage, we have included several articles grouped around common topics, such as "Should Drugs Be Legalized?" "Flag Burning and Free Speech," "The Minimum Legal Drinking Age," and "Animal Experimentation."

### ***Evaluating Student Models***

In addition to writing instruction and brief reading selections, each of the chapters in Parts One and Two includes a section on evaluating sample student papers. This section has two purposes. First, it is designed to provide students with "models" of successful papers that can be used to discuss what is expected of well-written paragraphs or essays. Second, it is meant to teach students to distinguish between successful and less successful papers so that they can better evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing.



### *Sentence Combining*

Each chapter in Parts One and Two includes a section on sentence combining. Since so many student writers rely primarily upon compound and relatively brief complex sentences, the sentence combining sections are designed to give students practice in writing sentences that move beyond the patterns they are most comfortable with. Beginning with simple exercises in recognizing when modifiers in one sentence can easily be “embedded” within another sentence, these sections gradually introduce more difficult sentence structures involving the use of coordination, parallelism, subordination, participial phrases, appositives, and sentence variety.

### *Group Work*

Throughout the text, exercises and writing assignments encourage students to work together, discussing the reading selections, comparing their responses to those selections, and helping each other develop their papers. While individual instructors will, of course, use such group work as they see fit, we have found it to be an invaluable teaching device, helping students to clarify their own thinking as they work with those around them.

## **New to This Edition**

In this third edition of *The Writer's Response*, we have made the following improvements:

- Chapter 7, “Synthesizing Ideas from Reading Selections,” has been thoroughly revised to better assist the student in this important, yet relatively difficult, writing assignment.
- In addition to the articles on “Flag Burning and Freedom of Speech,” Chapter 7 now includes five reading selections focusing on “The Minimum Legal Drinking Age.”
- Sixteen new reading selections have been added, covering topics ranging from the need for blacks and whites to question their own perspectives (“Colorblind,” Chapter 4), to a discussion of the current trend of body piercing (“The Modern Primitives,” Part Four), to the popularity of reality television shows (“*The Bachelor*: Silly, Sexist, and, to Many, Irresistible,” Chapter 5).
- As in all previous editions, cultural diversity and reactions to it are emphasized in articles throughout the text.
- Twenty-five percent of the sentence combining exercises have been revised in Parts One and Two.
- Many exercises have been revised in Parts One and Two of the text as well as in the editing chapters in Part Three.

## Instructor's Manual

The Instructor's Manual for *The Writer's Response* provides suggestions for teaching the course on a chapter-by-chapter basis and offers comments about the reading selections. It also includes answers to all exercises in the text.

## Acknowledgments

We want to thank our friends and colleagues at Palomar College for their unflagging encouragement and suggestions as we have revised this text. We particularly wish to acknowledge Jack Quintero, who retires this year after more than thirty years of teaching at Palomar. Jack's insights and guidance have made us better persons as well as better writers. A special thanks also goes to Brent Gowen, whose ever-present suggestions for new reading selections are very much appreciated. Finally, to the many other English instructors at Palomar who have taken the time to suggest ideas or to respond to our questions about the text, thank you.

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