ACCOUNTING: TEXT AND CASES

NINTH EDITION

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ACCOUNTING TEXT AND CASES

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Preface

An accounting text can be written with an emphasis on either of two viewpoints: (1) what the user of accounting information needs to know about accounting or (2) what the preparer of accounting reports needs to know about accounting. This book focuses on the user of accounting information. Because such a person needs to know enough about the preparation of accounting reports to use them intelligently, this text includes the technical material needed for this purpose. The book is aimed primarily, however, at the person who wants to be a knowledgeable user of accounting information. This focus is reinforced in the book's case studies, which help the student learn that accounting is not a cut-and-dried subject with all of its "answers" clearly indicated by the application of rules.

The focus of the book makes it particularly appropriate for required core courses in accounting, in which many of the students are not planning to take further elective accounting courses. First, we believe that if a core course stresses the more analytical uses of accounting information by managers and outside analysts rather than the procedural details that the practicing accountant needs to know, then those students who do not take further accounting courses will be left with a positive view of the importance of accounting rather than with the negative "bean counter" stereotype. Second, we feel that a user orientation in the core course actually is likely to generate a greater number of accounting majors from the class than if the course is oriented more toward the person who has already decided to

major in accounting. Similarly, in our experience the required accounting module in a management development program will generate little participant interest unless the module is oriented toward the nonaccountant user of accounting information. In sum, we think the book conveys the fact that accounting is interesting and fun, not dull and tedious.

Specifically, this book is used in at least the following four ways:

- 1. As an introductory course where most (if not all) of the students have no prior training in accounting. In many schools this introduction comprises two separate courses, one dealing with financial accounting and the other with management accounting. Many schools use this book for both such courses, whereas some use it only for financial accounting (Chapter 1 and Chapters 2–14) or for management accounting (Chapter 1 and Chapters 15–28). It is used in such introductory courses at both the upper under graduate level and in graduate programs. In addition to its widespread use in schools of business and management, it is also used in introductory accounting courses in some law schools, education schools, and schools of public health.
- 2. As an elective course that builds on a required introductory course in accounting—particularly where the introductory course had more of a procedural orientation and the elective is intended to be more conceptual, analytical, and user-oriented.
- 3. As the accounting module in a management development program where the participants represent a variety of functional and technical backgrounds.
- 4. As a nontechnical accounting reference book for nonaccountants in business and other organizations.

Although designed for beginning students, the book does not contain enough "pencil-pushing" material to meet the needs of some instructors of introductory courses. Such instructors may wish to use the companion volume, *Accounting Principles Workbook*, which, in addition to key terms and discussion questions, has more problem material (10–15 problems per chapter), a short practice set, and some cases that are not in this volume.

Many instructors also assign or recommend the programmed text *Essentials of Accounting*,² either as preliminary to study of the subject (it is often sent in advance to participants in M.B.A. and management development programs) or as a review device. It is a self-study introductory treatment of financial accounting, geared to Part 1 of this text.

The Cases

As in previous editions the cases have been selected because of their interest and educational value as a basis for class discussion. They are not

¹ Accounting Principles Workbook, 8th ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1995).

² Robert N. Anthony, *Essentials of Accounting*, 5th ed. (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1993). This material is also available in the form of computer software for IBM-compatible and Apple computers, titled *Teach Yourself Essentials of Accounting*.

PREFACE vii

necessarily intended to illustrate either correct or incorrect handling of management problems. Skill in the management use of accounting information can be acquired, we believe, only through experience. Thinking about a case and discussing it in informal discussion groups and in the classroom require the student to do something—to analyze a problem, to weigh various factors involved in it, to make some calculations, to take a position, and so on. In class the student is required to explain her or his point of view, to defend it, to understand and appraise the arguments of colleagues, and to decide what arguments are the strongest. Practice in doing these things helps to increase skill and understanding; in fact, many educators believe that the really important parts of a subject can be learned only by experience of some sort, as opposed to merely hearing or reading about them. Thus, although the case material comprises less than half the pages in this book, the discussion of these cases is by far the more important part of the educational process. Of course, such discussions contribute to the students' communication skills as well as to their understanding of accounting.

This edition has a total of 121 cases. Some of these are new, and the majority of them that were carried over from the previous edition have been updated (in some instances with a change in case name).

Occasionally, a student or instructor questions our use of small business settings for many of the cases. Such cases often avoid certain complexities at a point when the student is not yet prepared to deal with them. We also would note that studies have reported that small businesses (those employing fewer than 500 people) represent over 99 percent of all U.S. businesses, provide about 50 percent of all private-sector jobs, generate almost 40 percent of the GNP, and contribute two out of three newly created jobs. We therefore feel that exposure to some small business cases is beneficial to students, many of whom will eventually work in such firms or work with them as auditors or consultants.

Changes in the Ninth Edition

Developments in accounting, particularly financial accounting, have continued to be rapid in the last five years. These have resulted in many updating changes in the text. (Part 1 reflects Financial Accounting Standards Board [FASB] pronouncements through mid-1994, as well as the 1993 tax act.) More specifically, Chapters 2–12 reflect evolutionary and updating changes, including the additions of sections on executory contracts in Chapter 8, ESOPs and nonprofit organizations' equity in Chapter 9, other postretirement benefits in Chapter 10, and ethical problems in Chapter 14. For simplification the T-account method of preparing a cash flow statement has been deleted from Chapter 11.

The structure of Part 2 on management accounting has been changed in recognition of some students' confusing different cost *constructs* with different cost *systems*. The new structure stresses that there is *one* management accounting system, which uses full cost information (as well as

information on revenues and assets) for various measurement purposes, and uses responsibility cost information for management control purposes. In addition to the two purposes of measurement and control, management accounting has a third purpose—to aid in choosing from among alternative courses of action; but information for this purpose cannot come directly from the management accounting *system* because each alternative choice problem requires its own arrangement of accounting information.

Chapter 15 presents this new structure. The cost behavior coverage in Chapter 16 has been expanded to place far more emphasis on step-function costs and on the importance of being explicit about the relevant time period when characterizing a cost's behavior. Activity-based costing has been added to Chapter 18, and a brief discussion of quality costs is included in Chapter 19.

With this new structure the analysis of nonproduction variances appears in Chapter 21, immediately following coverage of production cost variances in Chapter 20. (Formerly, the two aspects of variance analysis were separated by several chapters, which some instructors found undesirable.) This unified treatment of variance analysis provides a natural transition into the other management control topics in Chapters 22–25, which include expanded treatment of control reports and incentive compensation in a new Chapter 25. Then short-run and long-term alternative choice decisions are described in Chapters 26 and 27, with Chapter 28 providing a summary of Part 2.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the many instructors and students who have made suggestions for improving this book. Included among those people are our colleagues at the Harvard Business School and the schools of business administration at The University of Michigan and Northeastern University, as well as the anonymous reviewers who commented on the previous edition.

Robert N. Anthony James S. Reece Julie H. Hertenstein

Index and Source of Cases

The 121 cases included in this book are listed below in alphabetical order, together with their authors' names and the institution with which each author was affiliated at the time the case was written. Cases with no name shown were written by, or under the supervision of, Robert N. Anthony, James S. Reece, or Julie H. Hertenstein. Unless otherwise indicated on the first page of a case, the copyright on all cases herein is held by Osceola Institute. No case may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the permission of its copyright holder. Information on requesting permission to reproduce Harvard Business School or Osceola Institute cases is included on the copyright page of this book. We regret that we are unable to provide permission information for cases not copyrighted by Harvard or Osceola.

Comments on the text, cases, or instructor's manual, or new ideas for teaching the cases, would be welcomed and should be sent to Professor Reece at the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1234.

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Moyer Corporation (B)
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PC Depot Piedmont University Pinetree Motel Problems in Full Cost Accounting Problems in Variance Analysis Reading Manufacturing Company Redwood Cafe (A) Redwood Cafe (B) Reynolds, R. J., Tobacco Company

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Contents

PART 1 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

1 The Nature and Purpose of Accounting, 3

The Need for Information, 3 Operating Information, 5 Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Definition of Accounting, The Profession of Accounting 8 Our Approach to Accounting, Preconceptions about Accounting, 10 Plan of the Book, 10 The Financial Accounting Framework, 11 Accounting's Historical Antecedents, 12 Accounting as a Language, Nature of Principles, 13 Criteria, 14

Source of Accounting
Principles, 15
Financial Statements, 17
Financial Statement
Objectives, 17
Income Tax Reporting, 18
Case 1-1 Kim Brooks, 20
Case 1-2 Baron Coburg, 21

2 Basic Accounting Concepts: The Balance Sheet, 23

Basic Concepts, 23
The Money Measurement
Concept, 24
The Entity Concept, 25
The Going-Concern Concept, 26
The Cost Concept, 27
The Dual-Aspect Concept, 29
The Balance Sheet, 30
An Overall View, 31
Account Categories, 34
Assets, 34

3

Liabilities, 37 Owners' Equity, 39 Ratios, 42 Balance Sheet Changes, 42 Original Capital Contribution, 43 Bank Loan, 43 Purchase of Merchandise, 43 Sale of Merchandise, 44 Concluding Comment, 44 Case 2-1, Maynard Company (A), 46 Case 2-2, Music Mart, Inc., 47 Case 2-3, Redwood Cafe (A), 47 Case 2-4, Los Niños Day Care Center, 49 Basic Accounting Concepts: The Income Statement, 51	Net Income, 73 Statement of Retained Earnings, 73 Relation between Balance Sheet and Income Statement, 73 Income Statement Percentages, 75 Other Concepts of Income, 75 Accrual versus Cash-Basis Accounting, 75 Income Tax Accounting, 76 Economic Income, 77 Case 3-1 Maynard Company (B), 79 Case 3-2 Santa Fe Art Gallery, 80 Case 3-3 Redwood Cafe (B), 82 Case 3-4 John Bartlett, 82 Case 3-5 Pinetree Motel, 84
	Case 3–6 National Helontogical
The Nature of Income, 51	Association, 87
The Accounting Period Concept, 53 Interim Reports, 54	Accounting Records and Systems, 91
Relation between Income and Owners' Equity, 54 Income Not the Same as Increase in Cash, 55 The Conservatism Concept, 56 Application to Revenue Recognition, 57 The Realization Concept, 59 The Matching Concept, 60 Recognition of Expenses, 61 Terminology, 61 Criteria for Expense Recognition, 61 Expenses and Expenditures, 63 Dividends, 63 Summary of Expense Measurement, 66 Gains and Losses, 66 The Consistency Concept, 66 The Materiality Concept, 68	Recordkeeping Fundamentals, 91 The Account, 92 Permanent Accounts and Temporary Accounts, 93 The Ledger, 94 The Chart of Accounts, 94 Debit and Credit, 95 Transaction Analysis, 96 Example: Campus Pizzeria, Inc., 96 Balancing Accounts, 100 The Trial Balance, 101 The Adjusting and Closing Process, 102 Adjusting Entries, 102 Closing Entries, 106 Statement Preparation, 108 The Journal, 109 Summary of the Accounting Process, 111
The Income Statement, 69 Revenues, 70	Accounting Systems, 111 Special Journals, 112 Control Accounts and Subsidiary
Cost of Sales, 71 Gross Margin, 72 Expenses, 72	Control Accounts and Subsidiary Ledgers, 113 Imprest Funds, 113

CONTENTS xi

Internal Accounting Controls, 114 Significant Recordkeeping Ideas, 115 Computer-Based Accounting Systems, 115 What a Computer-Based System Does, 116 Relation to Manual Systems, 117 Problems with Computer Systems, 117	Current Ratio, 148 Acid-Test Ratio, 149 Days' Cash, 149 Days' Receivables, 150 Case 5-1 Moyer Corporation (A), 152 Case 5-2 MacDonald's Farm, 154 Case 5-3 Middleburg Realty Company, 156 Case 5-4 Jean Coffin (A), 157
Appendix: Additional Accounting	6 Cost of Sales and Inventories, 161
Cycle Procedures, 118 Locating Errors Revealed by the Trial Balance, 118 The Worksheet, 119 Case 4-1, PC Depot, 121 Case 4-2, Save-Mart, 122 Case 4-3, Copies Express, 123 Case 4-4, Trevino's Service Station, 124	Types of Companies, 161 Supplies, 162 Merchandising Companies, 163 Acquisition Cost, 163 The Basic Measurement Problem, 164 Periodic Inventory Method, 165 Perpetual Inventory Method, 167 Comparison of Periodic and
Revenue and Monetary Assets, 129	Perpetual Methods, 168 Retail Method, 169
Timing of Revenue Recognition, 129 Basic Recognition Criteria, 130 Delivery Method, 130 Percentage-of-Completion Method, 132 Production Method, 134 Installment Method, 134 Amount of Revenue Recognized, 136 Bad Debts, 136 Sales Discounts, 139 Credit Card Sales, 140 Sales Returns and Allowances, 141 Revenue Adjustment versus Expense, 141 Warranty Costs, 142 Interest Revenue, 143 Monetary Assets, 145 Difference in Reporting Monetary and Nonmonetary Assets, 146 Cash, 146 Receivables, 146	Manufacturing Companies, 170 Inventory Accounts, 170 Materials Used, 172 Cost of Goods Manufactured, 173 Cost of Goods Sold, 174 Product Costing Systems, 176 Product Costs and Period Costs, 176 Service Companies, 177 Inventory Costing Methods, 178 Specific Identification Method, 179 Average Cost Method, 179 First-In, First-Out Method, 180 Last-In, First-Out Method, 180 Comparison of Methods, 183 Lower of Cost or Market, 186 Analysis of Inventory, 187 Inventory Turnover, 187 Case 6-1, Riechel Company, 189 Case 6-2, Fahning Manufacturing Company, 190
Marketable Securities, 146 Analysis of Monetary Assets, 147	Case 6-3, Medfield Corporation, 193 Case 6-4, Morgan Manufacturing, 194

5

7

Rights, 232

Leasehold Improvements, 233

Case 6–5, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco	Deferred Changes,	233
Company, 196	Research and Deve	
Case 6–6, Jean Coffin (B), 203	Case 7–1 Moyer Corp	
Long-Lived Assets and Their	Case 7-2 Jean Coffin	
Amortization, 205	Case 7–3 Stafford Pre	
	Case 7—4 Digitrex Con	
Nature of Long-Lived Assets, 205	Case 7-5 Depreciation	n at Dena and
Types of Long-Lived Assets, 206	Pan Am, 243	
Plant and Equipment:	8 Sources of Capital: D	ebt, 249
Acquisition, 207	-	
Distinction between Asset and	Nature of Liabilities,	
Expense, 207	Executory Contract	
Items Included in Cost, 208	Contingencies, 25	2
Acquisitions Recorded at Other than	Liabilities as a Sou	rce of
Cost, 209	Funds, <i>252</i>	
Basket Purchases, 210	Debt Capital, 253	
Plant and Equipment:	Term Loans, 253	
Depreciation, 210	Bonds, <i>253</i>	
Judgments Required, 211	Accounting for Bonds	s, <i>254</i>
Service Life, 212	Recording a Bond	Issue, <i>254</i>
Depreciation Method, 213	Balance Sheet Pres	entation, 257
Choice of a Depreciation	Bond Interest Expe	ense, <i>257</i>
Method, $2\overline{15}$	Retirement of Bond	ds, 259
Accounting for Depreciation, 216	Refunding a Bond	Issue, 259
Change in Depreciation Rates, 218	Other Liabilities, 26	6 <i>0</i>
Partial Year Depreciation, 218	Analysis of Capital S	tructure, 261
Disclosure, 218	Debt Ratios, 261	
Plant and Equipment: Disposal, 219	Times Interest Earn	ned, <i>263</i>
Exchanges and Trade-Ins, 220	Bond Ratings, 26	3 .
Group Depreciation, 222	Appendix: Present Va	
Significance of Depreciation, 222	Concept of Present	
Income Tax Considerations, 224	Finding Present Va	
Income Tax Depreciation, 224	Present Value of a	
Investment Tax Credit, 225	Payments, 267	
Leased Assets, 227	Present Values and	l Liabilities, 268
Capital Leases, 228	Present Values and	
Natural Resources, 229	Calculating Bond	
Depletion, 230	Case 8–1, Martin Con	
Accretion and Appreciation, 230	(A), 272	I.
Intangible Assets, 231	Case 8–2, Stybel Ind	ustries, Inc., 274
Goodwill, 231	Case 8–3, Megashye	
Patents, Copyrights, Franchise	Company, 276	0
i decireo, cop , i mitto, i i diferito		

es, *233* evelopment Costs, 234 forporation (B), 236 fin (C), 237 Press, 239 Company, 241 ition at Delta and

l: **Debt**, 249

ıd Yields, 270 Corporation Industries, Inc., 274 ye Engineering Case 8-4, Paul Murray, 278 Case 8-5, Jean Coffin (D), 279

CONTENTS xiii

9	Sources of Capital: Owners' Equity, 281	Nonoperating Items, 324 Extraordinary Items, 325
	Forms of Business Organization, 281 Sole Proprietorship, 281 Partnership, 282 Corporation, 282 Accounting for Proprietor's and Partners' Equity, 283 Proprietorship Equity, 283 Partnership Equity, 284 Ownership in a Corporation, 285	Discontinued Operations, 326 Change in Accounting Principles, 326 Adjustments to Retained Earnings, 327 Foreign Currency Accounting, 328 Foreign Currency Transactions, 328 Foreign Currency Translation, 329 Net Income, 331 Accounting and Changing Prices, 331
	Preferred Stock, 285 Common Stock, 286 Treasury Stock, 288 Reserves, 288 Retained Earnings, 289 Dividends, 289 Warrants and Stock Options, 291 Employee Stock Ownership Plans,	Nature of the Problem, 331 Proposed Solutions, 332 Related Developments, 333 Case 10-1, Martin Corporation (B), 335 Case 10-2, Silver Appliance Company, 336
	292 Balance Sheet Presentation, 293 Earnings per Share, 293 Common Stock Equivalents, 294	Case 10–3, Union Carbide Corporation, 338 Case 10–4, Major League Baseball (B), 341
	The Line between Debt and Equity, 295	Case 10-5, Freedom Technology Company, 350
	Zero-Coupon Bonds, 295 Redeemable Preferred Stock, 296 Equity in Nonprofit Organizations, 296 Case 9-1 Xytech, Inc., 298 Case 9-2 FMC Corporation Recapitalization (A), 299 Case 9-3 Trelease Industries, Inc. 306	The Statement of Cash Flows, 353 The Concept of Flow Statements, 353 Purpose of the Cash Flow Statement, 354 Sources and Uses of Cash, 354 The Cash Flow Statement, 356 Statement Categories, 356 Investing Activities, 357
10	Other Items That Affect Net Income, 309	Financing Activities, 360 Noncash Transactions, 362
Pensions Other Po Compen Income Tax Book-to- Deferred	Personnel Costs, 309 Pensions, 311 Other Postretirement Benefits, 314 Compensated Absences, 314 Income Taxes, 314 Book-to-Tax Differences, 315 Deferred Taxes, 317 Accounting Entries, 320	Cash Flow from Operating Activities, 362 Indirect Method Calculations, 363 Summary of the Cash Flow Statement, 368 Misconceptions About Depreciation, 369 Cash Flow Earnings, 370

Preparation of the Cash Flow	Return on Investment, 420
Statement, 370	Sound Financial Position, 422
Cash Flow Worksheet, 371	Structure of the Analysis, 422
Worksheet Entries, 371	Overall Measures, 424
Statement Preparation, 376	Return on Investment, 424
Summary of Preparation	Investment Turnover and Profit
Procedures, 376	Margin, 427
Analysis of the Cash Flow	Price/Earnings Ratio, 428
Statement, 377	Profitability Ratios, 429
Ratios, 378	Profit Margin, 429
Cash Flow Projections, 379	Investment Utilization Ratios. 430
Case 11–1 Medieval Adventures	Investment Turnover, 430
Company, 381	Working Capital Measures, 431
Case 11–2 Amerbran Company	Financial Condition Ratios, 432
(A), 382	Liquidity and Solvency, 432
Case 11–3 Statements of Cash Flows:	Dividend Policy, 432
Three Examples, 384	Growth Measures, 433
Case 11–4 FMC Corporation	
	Making Comparisons, 436 Difficulties, 436
Recapitalization (B), 390	•
Case 11–5 W. T. Grant Company, 392	Possible Bases for Comparison,
Acquisitions and Consolidated	438
Statements, 397	Use of Comparisons, 439
Association for Insection and 207	Case 13-1 Genmo Corporation, 441
Accounting for Investments, 397	Case 13–2 Amerbran Company
Fair-Value Method, 397	(B), 443
Equity Method, 398	Case 13–3 The Financial
Consolidated Basis, 399	Detective, 444
Business Combinations, 399	Case 13–4 Springfield National
Purchase versus Pooling, 400	Bank, 445
Accounting as a Pooling, 401	4 Understanding Financial
Accounting as a Purchase, 402	Statements, 453
Impact on Balance Sheet, 403	·
Impact on Earnings, 403	Additional Information in Annual
Consolidated Statements, 405	Reports, 453
Basis for Consolidation, 406	Auditors' Opinion, 454
Consolidation Procedure, 406	Notes to Financial Statements, 457
Asset Valuation, 409	Segment Reporting, 458
Minority Interest, 410	Full Disclosure, 458
Case 12–1, Hardin Tool Company,	Comparative Statements, 459
412	Securities and Exchange
Case 12–2, Carter Corporation, 413	Commission (SEC) Reports, 460
Case 12–3, United States Steel and	Review of Criteria and Concepts, 460
Marathon Oil, 415	Criteria, 461
Financial Statement Analysis 440	Concepts, 462
Financial Statement Analysis, 419	Accounting Alternatives, 466
Business Objectives, 419	Regulatory Requirements, 466